KILL THE DISSENTERS, MAKE NO REFORMS, CONTROL THE MARKET

How three generations of Kim men have maintained control for so long, and why there's little hope for the future

Groove is the No. 1 magazine for expats in Korea. Find out what's new, what's news and what there is to do.

GROOVE

KOREA

July 2012 / Issue 69

THE TRUTH ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS WITH FOREIGNERS

"The love my wife and I share, like the love shared by so many international couples, is far stronger than the hate spread by those who refuse to understand it. Love transcends all boundaries, be they national, cultural, or social."
— **Daniel and Bonnie Lee-Kilduff**



KILLER CONCERTS

The Jisan and Green Groove festivals will keep you on your feet for days. Radiohead, Stone Roses, James Blake, Akon — need we say more?

BURGER CLASH

Looking for a great burger, but tired of the same old? We went on a mission to find some gems and test the reputations of established places.


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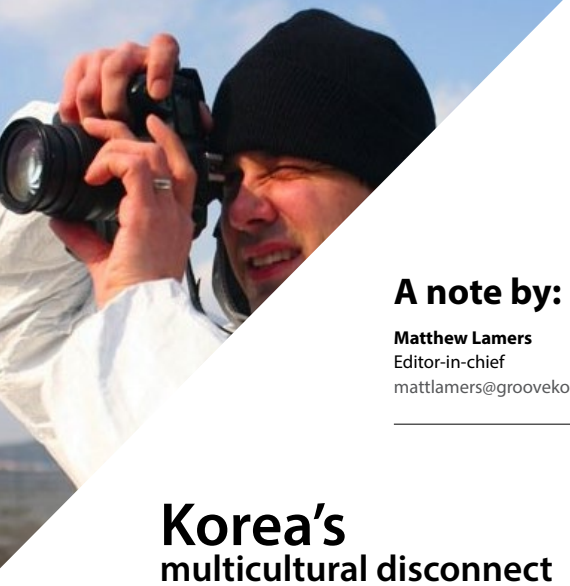
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A note by:

Matthew Lamers
Editor-in-chief
mattlamers@groovekorea.com

Korea's
multicultural disconnect

Expats and Koreans alike raised a firestorm of criticism over the May 28 news broadcast by Munwha Broadcasting Corporation titled "The shocking reality about relationships with foreigners," whose English translation went viral on the Internet shortly thereafter. Thousands of people flocked to Facebook in particular to join together in solidarity against what we regard as irresponsible journalism — for its xenophobic portrayal of Western men as predators of Korean women, as well as for the weak, helpless "victims" it made Korean women out to be.

The incident directly contradicts the image the Korean government has tried so hard to promote to the world — a safe, friendly and welcoming environment open to foreign workers, investments and businesses. To establish themselves, to contribute to Korea's economy and society, to raise a family.

In reality, Korea's rapid economic growth has far outpaced its cultural maturity in the past 50 years. Older generations who grew up in a mostly homogeneous world are less inclined to accept that the tolerance of a multicultural society is a growing necessity. Their children, in turn, have not been raised to be open to the idea either, despite the country becoming more heterogeneous.

The government has, for its part, taken many initiatives to address this issue. "Multicultural" and "global" centers are being built around the country to help new immigrants adapt to Korean society. Acts of racism are now publishable in a court of law. More teachers are being sensitized to the needs of biracial students in an effort to stem their shockingly high dropout rates. The government has also opened "multicultural schools" exclusively for biracial children.

But support centers and anti-discrimination laws can only do so much. The more important and more difficult challenge is to come to a national consensus on a more inclusive definition of "who is Korean."

How Korea handles the next step in its quest to be a multicultural society has social and economic implications. Make no mistake: Korea is not a multicultural country; having 1 million foreigners does not make a country multicultural, especially when just a fraction of them will ever be considered Korean.

So how can a nation that has been mostly composed of a single race until only five or six decades ago not only accept this idea, but make it an integral part of their lives? For me, the next step is clear: start with the children.

Tolerance of differences is a concept not inherent — it must be taught. The shift to multiculturalism must begin in Korea's schools.

As of last year, there were 151,154 biracial children in Korea, a drastic jump from the 5,000 it had in 1965 and even the 44,258 counted in 2007. However, Korean public schools have not traditionally been equipped to deal with these children's needs. Biracial children with low Korean-language skills often struggle both scholastically and socially within the walls of public schools. While the government's solution to create special schools exclusively for them may help the students study in the short term, at the same time it creates a wedge between ethnically Korean children and the very children it was hoping to help.

Biracial kids certainly confront unique problems here, such as language and discrimination. However, how does removing them from their fluently Korean-speaking peers help them learn the language? More importantly, how does removing these children, whom society already regards as different, facilitate their acceptance?

If the acceptance of multiculturalism is the ultimate goal, then segregation, especially at such an early life stage, is not the answer. This institutionalized discrimination is testament to the idea that Korea still has a ways to go before it can call itself truly multicultural.

Furthermore, ethnic Korean students still do not receive enough education on what is expected of citizens in a multiethnic society. Parents and schools both have responsibility here. A survey conducted last year found that 70 percent of Korean students had not received any education on multiculturalism and another survey found that 86.5 percent of Korean nationals think "Koreans" should have Korean ancestors.

My daughters are not yet old enough to articulate the discrimination that older biracial children — along with many in the expat population — confront on a daily basis. But that time is coming soon enough. And when they do begin to articulate their feelings about these issues, I want the conversation in Korean society to have matured to the point where they both can feel comfortable talking about it.

The country where I want my daughters to grow up is one where their "Korean-ness" is no longer questioned.

HOT ON:
www.groovekorea.com

Insight: **How K-pop can help you learn Korean**

There are ways that you can use K-pop to learn Korean faster and enjoy the learning process quite a bit more. K-pop can make learning Korean less frustrating.

In order to go from not knowing a single word to being able to understand and speak a new language comfortably, you need to make a lot of effort and stay motivated to continue learning, forgetting, learning again and practicing. This is where K-pop comes in.

The biggest drawback, however, of learning with K-pop is that a lot of the lyrics have incomplete sentences or expressions that would not be used in real-life situations.

By Sun Hyun-woo
Read it online in July or in print in August.

Community: **Roads rule**

One expat blogger has turned an obsession with Korea's construction projects into a community-building enterprise. For infrastructure enthusiasts like Andy Tebay, these are exciting times. "There are all these major projects going on but in actual fact not many people know about them," said Tebay. "That's where I come in and that's what I'd like to provide."

To accommodate the influx of guests and thus bolster the tourism industry, a dizzying array of new buildings, stadiums, roads and rail lines are already scheduled for construction, with more projects on the way. He draws upon a diversity of sources, including the Ministry of Land, Transport and Maritime Affairs, news articles, the websites of construction companies, other blogs and direct interviews with industry insiders.

By Ara Cho
Read it online in July or in print in August.

Community: **Talk To Me In Korean**

Starting with an operation of just three people, www.talktomeinkorean.com was launched with eight levels, audio lessons, videos and opportunities to ask specific questions of the teachers. Since the launch, the operation has grown to nine people, with five teachers, plus content developers and technical support.

With over 550,000 users, the website has been a huge success.

Their strategy for luring new users has a lot to do with its accessibility to, in one teacher's words, "deceive the people into thinking it's easy."

Based on the feedback they've received, people in and outside of Korea find the site simple to use. "Since the entry barrier is so low for our site they're very grateful for the free content. We can teach them something in a tweet."

By Rob York
Read it online in July or in print in August.



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Mapogu, Seoul
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Kangnam
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Seochogu, Seoul
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Multiethnic families in Korea

By the numbers

Number of foreign spouses living in Korea in 2001 and 2010, respectively: **25,182 / 137,448**
Number of international marriages in 1990, 2000 and 2010, respectively: **4,710 / 11,605 / 34,235**
Ratio of all marriages in Korea consisting of one foreign national in 1990: **1.2 percent**
Same ratio in 2007: **11.1 percent**
Ratio in which the groom was the foreigner in an interracial wedding in 1990: **87 percent**
The same ratio in 2004: **28 percent**
In 2009, the ratio of interracial marriages with a Korean groom and a foreign bride: **75.5**
Top exporters of brides to Korea in 2009: **China (34 percent) / Vietnam (22 percent)**
Average age difference in Korean-Vietnamese marriages: **17 years**
Percentage of multiracial families that live on earnings at or below the national minimum hourly wage of 4,000 won: **53 percent**
Number of multiethnic households in 2010: **386,977**
Number of biracial children in Korea in 1965, 2007, 2011, respectively: **5,000 / 44,258 / 151,154**
In 2009, the ratio of children with a foreign-born mother and a Korean father: **4 percent**
By 2050, the predicted ratio of mixed-race children to ethnically Korean children: **10 percent**
Number of biracial students in Seoul's elementary, middle and high schools in 2011: **6,837**
Percentage of school-aged children from multiethnic families who were not attending any school in 2011: **33 percent (elementary school) / 47 percent (middle school) / 72 percent (high school)**
The dropout rate of multiracial children from elementary school: **15.4 percent**
The figure for ethnically Korean kids: **22 times less than that**
Percentage of mixed-race children bullied at school, according to a 2011 survey: **37 percent**
Percentage of children from the survey who were told to "go back your country": **21 percent**
Percentage of biracial children who were at least six months behind their ethnically Korean peers, according to a 2010 survey of 2,400 children: **60 percent**
Current number of prep schools for biracial children: **3**
The proposed number for 2013: **26**
Middle and high schools that were majority multiracial in 2011: **80**
Ratio of Korean students who have not received education on multiculturalism, according to a 2011 survey: **70 percent**
Ratio of Koreans aged 19 to 74 who have positive feelings about the coexistence of different races, according to a survey of 2,500 people: **36 percent**
That ratio in 18 European countries: **74 percent**
Ratio of Koreans who think Koreans should have Korean ancestors: **86.5 percent**
For Japanese, Swedish respectively: **72.1 percent / 30 percent**
Total number of people residing in multiethnic households in 2010: **939,379**
Province with the highest number of multiethnic households: G**yeonggi Province (115,043)**
Province with the fewest: **Jeju (2,587)**
Amount of money Korea will spend on social integration programs in 2012: **1.9 billion won**
The number of "multicultural family support centers" in 2010 and 2011, respectively: **159 / 200**
Number of interracial marriages that failed in 2004 and 2010, respectively: **3,300 / 11,245**
From 2003 to 2010, the number of Korean women who divorced their foreign husbands: **18,715**
Number of Korean men that did the same: **27,775**
Number of biracial children from broken families in 2004, 2007, 2010: **500 / 1,000 / 1,500**
The number of times the word "multicultural" appeared in the Toronto Star online and in print — the leading newspaper in the most multicultural city in the world — online and in print since Jan. 1, 2010: **331**
The number of times the same word "multicultural" appeared in the Korea Herald online and in print during the same period: **431**

Sources: Ministry of Public Administration and Security, Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, Statistics Korea, Center for Multicultural Korea, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, National Human Rights Commission of Korea, Ministry of Health and Welfare, Seoul Metropaolitan Office of Education, Massachusetts Historical Society, Korea Herald, Korea Times, Toronto Star

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What "The shocking reality about relationships with foreigners" tells us about the media and society as a whole.







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Jisan Valley Rock Festival primer
Page 64

What started in 2009 as a fledgling music festival trying to take on surly, older brother Pentaport has now gotten a lot bigger than its sibling in Incheon. With Radiohead on the bill, it certainly should be given adult status.

Jisan interviews: Busker Busker, Taru, Black Skirts
Page 66

Rather than tell you what you already know about the big bands, we've interviewed some Korean acts: Busker Busker, Black Skirts, Taru and Lucid Fall.

Jisan's don't miss bands
Page 71

Green Groove Festival primer
Page 76

Overlook this festival at your own peril, for this is shaping up to be one of the best weekends of music in Korea. (Plus, you get free beer for picking up trash.)





Green Groove's don't miss bands
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Some of the acts set to take the stage: Akon, Infected Mushroom, 10cm, Delispice

Two roads to art
Page 82

We examine the journeys of two artists with very different approaches: one an optimist who finds inspiration in embracing what's around him, the other a critic of society.

Fostering a creative community
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At the box office
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Must Reads

Into China: North Korean defectors tell their stories
Page 18

North Korea's dictator, Kim Jong-un, is just as ruthless as his father, and his father before him. It's no surprise, then, to read accounts of people so desperate to get out that they will risk not only their life, but also the lives of anyone they have had any sort of relationship with. Groove Korea interviews two defectors who escaped through China.



The truth about relationships with foreigners
Page 36

MBC came under a torrent of criticism when it aired the program "The shocking reality about relationships with foreigners." In order to broadcast such irresponsible journalism, the network ignored the thousands of foreigners who are happily married to Koreans all around the world. They are represented in this collage.



Get dirty at Green Groove
Page 76

Overlook the Green Groove Festival at your own peril, for this Groove Korea-sponsored event is shaping up to be one of the best weekends of music on the peninsula. (Plus, you get free beer for picking up trash!) Musicians include Akon, Infected Mushroom, Delispice, 10cm and a surprise Korean band (hint: half-a-dozen lovely ladies).



Rock out at Jisan
Page 64

Radiohead, Stone Roses, James Blake — need we say more? This is another Groove Korea-sponsored festival that will keep you on your feet for three days. Rather than tell you what you already know about the aforementioned bands, we've interviewed some Korean acts: Busker Busker, Black Skirts, Taru and Lucid Fall.



Burger clash
Page 44

Looking for a great burger, but tired of the same old? We went on a mission to find some gems and test the reputations of established places in Itaewon, Gyeongnidan and Haebangchon. You won't find any pompous 20,000 won burgers on this list of nine burger joints.



Get wet
Page 62

The best way to deal with the heat is to get wet. Here are some of the best water parks in the greater Seoul area — and how to get discounts for them.



The Inbox

What's on your mind? Share your thoughts on a Groove article: Did you love it? Did it suck? Are you planning a charity concert and want to spread the word? Let us know on our Facebook or Twitter page and we'll print it here. This is your page — get your message out!

Facebook it; tweet it; e-mail it to submissions@groovekorea.com

Website

Re: Learning to live between two worlds

An inspiring article and interview. The concept of "home" is not black and white for many of us — especially many of us expats in Korea, I imagine. "Drifting House" is an excellent book and I look forward to attending Krys' reading at What The Book? next weekend!

— Jessi Milton

Re: Staying motivated to study Korean

I really like this article; it has good advice. I will try to incorporate it in my Korean studies. I've been listening to TTMIK for about a year and I absolutely love it. It's, in my opinion, the best Korean learning site for English speakers. I went from knowing nothing to intermediate level in less than a year. Thank you!!!

— website user bb3

RE: Staying motivated to study Korean

I have been listening to programs at www.talktomeinkorean.com for two months now, and I really love it! It is fun listening to the two hosts teaching you, too. I have learned a lot and realize it's not that hard.

— website user chococat07

Facebook

Just got a hold of the most recent copy last night in Itaewon. Really good stuff. I am impressed.

— Kimberly Maria Buxton

RE: Aliens won't enslave humans (so says Korea Herald)

What I worry most about extraterrestrials is not that they will conquer and enslave, but rather that they will turn the Earth into a tourist hot-spot — and then they'll go around disrespecting our cultural heritage. I don't want interstellar cephalopods mugging in snapshots in front of the NY Stock Exchange and acting all superior when pointing a tentacle at our "quaint" oil refineries and nuke plants. Just ain't fittin'.

— website user chococat07

RE: Groove's call for 'multicultural' collage

Perfect response. Thank you, Groove.

— AC Cutta

Great idea. I was so shocked to see the MBC video, so I love this. :)

— Brady Paron

Oops

RE: In fitness, sometimes the fewer the better

June's Groove Korea incorrectly stated that the name of the owner of Lance & J Fitness was Lee Seung-hwan. The owner is actually Ryu Sung-yeul. We also misstated the website as www.kettleball.com, when in fact it is www.kettleball.co.kr. We apologize for the errors.



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Issue Date: July 1, 2012
Registration Date: January 25, 2008
Registration No.: Seoul Ra 11806

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Groove Korea Magazine 2012

Connecting Communities

Introducing some editors, writers and photographers behind this month's issue.



Luc Forsyth
Canada

Luc Forsyth is a photojournalist specializing in international social and cultural issues. He has been traveling and documenting since 2006. He has also planted more than 750,000 trees in his life and has sailed more than 5,000 miles on the open ocean. He is currently based in Seoul. Luc contributed the article "Into China" and "Kill the dissenters" to this month's Groove Korea.

Elaine Ramirez
USA



Elaine tends to go wherever the wind carries her, and the most recent gust swept her to Korea. After stints in New York and Chile, the California native now works as an editor in Seoul. When not editing for Groove or her newspaper, she's off riding her motorbike along the Han, exploring the far corners of the peninsula, or sleeping. Elaine is Groove Korea's contributing editor.



Rajnesh Sharma
Canada

Rajnesh is a Canadian writer/photographer who has been to nearly 30 countries on a mission to travel as much of the world as possible. When not enthralled in her passion for storytelling, she is intrigued by movies, reading and nature. Rajnesh proved to be invaluable this month by donating her time to proofread the magazine. She also contributed the article "The journey of an artist."

John M. Rodgers
USA



John M. Rodgers is a founding editor of The Three Wise Monkeys webzine and currently acts as Groove Korea's editor-at-large. He's contributed to Korean dailies, the New York Times and International Herald Tribune, and worked as a beat reporter at a local paper in the U.S. state of New Hampshire where he's from. John also writes the monthly column "Repatriation."



Dylan Goldby
Australia

Dylan is a passionate photographer who loves to speak in the third person. Knee-deep in kimchi and shooting it from every angle, he has been on the peninsula for nigh on seven years now. He is a freelancer and teacher of photography. He is a regular contributor to Groove Korea, a moderator at the Seoul Photo Club and loves to work with other photographers in the never-ending task of photographing Korea. Dylan contributes the monthly photography column "Capturing Korea."

On the cover:
Multiculturalism

"The love my wife and I share, like the love shared by so many international couples, is far stronger than the hate spread by those who refuse to understand it. Love transcends all boundaries, be they national, cultural, or social. This is the message that we need to be spreading." — *Daniel and Bonnie Lee-Kilduff*

See the full story on Page 36



Cover design by Daniel Sanchez

Our past three issues:



June 2012
Krys Lee. The sensational story of Lilly Lee and Brian Aylward's comeback



May 2012
SuperColorSuper. Yeosu Expo 2012. In the shadow of Gangnam



April 2012
Out with God. Cherry blossom festivals & Korea's stressed masses

Check out past issues at:
www.groovekorea.com

THIS MONTH's EVENTS

JULY 1 - JULY 31

1 - Sunday

Comedy: Comedy Night with Brian Aylward @ Yaletown in Sinchon; 8 pm; 10,000 won

Canada Day: Eat Canadian food and drink beer @ Canadian Embassy, Schofield Hall; 35,000 won

Language exchange: Speak Korean, English, French, Spanish, Japanese @ Maple coffee in Hongdae; 3 pm

2 - Monday

Food: Wing Night @ Yaletown in Sinchon (Mondays); 400 won/wing; (02) 333-1604

Social: Open mic @ Tony's in Itaewon (Mondays); tonysitaewon.com

Exhibit: Leandro Erlich's exhibition "Inexistence" @ Song Eun Art Space; see exhibits page

3 - Tuesday

Food: 2 For 1 fish & chips @ Wolfhound (Tuesdays); wolfhoundpub.com

Baseball: Samsung Lions vs LG Twins at Jamsil Stadium, Seoul; 6:30; www.mykbo.net

Food: Wing night @ 3 Alley Pub in Itaewon; 3alleypub.com

4 - Wednesday

Social: Quiz night @ Craftworks in Noksapyeong (Wednesdays); http://craftworkstaphouse.com

Exhibit: Lim Anna's installation exhibition "irony – addicted" @ Jean Art Galley; thru July 11; see exhibits page

Beer: Beer buffet @ 200 Bran Hauns; 9,900 won; Mon, Thurs, Sun at 5 pm; (02) 3481-9062

5 - Thursday

Festival: Gangjin Celadon Festival in Gangjin, South Jeolla Province; July 5-Aug 28; http://gangjinfes.or.kr

Network: Toastmasters @ The Cantina in Daejon; every first Thursday of the month; 10:30;

Exhibit: Jan Saudek's "Photo Exhibition Korea" @ Insa Art Center; thru July 15; see exhibits page

6 - Friday

Festival: World Taekwondo Culture Expo in Muju-gun, North Jeolla Province; July 6-11; www.wtcexpo.net

Seminar: Financial planning for expats @ Regus Business Center, Yeoido; register by 4th; yeouidosmbiz@gmail.com

Music: Loro's, Vidulgi OoyoO, Baek Hyun-Jin, Byul @ Guro Arts Valley Theater; www.guroartsvalley.or.kr

7 - Saturday

Music: Galaxy Express, The Moonshiners, and more @ Guro Arts Valley Theater; www.guroartsvalley.or.kr

Lecture: "Self-Actualization Learning Technology" @ DaegakZheon Dharma Hall, Dongguk Uni; 2 pm; 2260-3891~2

Comedy: Comedy Night with Brian Aylward @ Rocky Mountain Tavern in Itaewon; 10,000 won

8 - Sunday

Students: cultural experience for foreign students @ Gangnam Office Station; 8 am; July 7-8; kmaseoul@hanmail.net

Self-help: Codependents Anonymous meeting @ the International Lutheran Church; 5 p.m.

9 - Monday

Korean study: Korean classes start @ Itaewon Global Village Center; http://global.seoul.go.kr/itaewon

Exhibit: Eelco Brand's photography exhibit "The illusionary camera" @ Gallery Lumiere; thru July 11; see exhibits page

10 - Tuesday

Baseball: Hanhwa Eagles vs Doosan Bears @ Jamsil Stadium, Seoul; 6:30 pm

Lecture: Confucianism and Theism: A look at the life and thought of Tasan Chong Yagyong; @ Somerset; 7:30pm

11 Wednesday

Comedy: Standup comedy (Wednesdays) @ Tony's in Itaewon; tonysitaewon.com

Seminar: Healthcare Innovation @ JW Marriott Hotel Seoul; 300,000 won; www.amchamkorea.org; 9 am

12 - Thursday

Food: Wing night @ 3 Alley Pub in Itaewon; 3alleypub.com

Exhibit: Astrid Koeppe's drawings, sketches exhibit @ Gallery Dam; July 12–21; see exhibits page

Language exchange: Speak Korean, English every Tues and Thurs @ Hanla Classic; 6-8 pm; communitykorea.com

13 - Friday

Music: The Primary, Kuang Program, Asleep Without Dreaming and more @ Dolce in Cheonan; 10 pm

Baseball: Nexen Heroes vs LG Twins @ Jamsil Stadium, Seoul; 6:30 pm

Theater: Probationary Theatre's "Gaucho" opens and run through July 22; www.probationarytheatre.com

14 - Saturday

Festival: Boryeong Mud Festival on Daecheon Beach; July 14-24; www.mudfestival.or.kr

Music: Release party for The Koxx's "Bon Voyage" EP @ V-Hall in Hongdae; 7 pm

Excursion: Haeinsa temple in South Gyeongsang Province; 8 am; raskb.com

15 - Sunday

Excursion: Soyang Lake and Gugok Water Fall in Chuncheon, Gangwon Province; 8:30 am; raskb.com

16 - Monday

Food: Wing night @ Craftworks in Noksapyeong (Mondays); http://craftworkstaphouse.com

17 - Tuesday

Holiday: Constitution Day

Baseball: Giants vs Heroes at Mokdong Stadium, Seoul, Seoul; 6:30

For suggestions or comments email Matthew Lamers: mattlamers@groovekorea.com

*All the events published in this calendar are subject to unforeseen changes by the promoters. Groove Korea does not take responsibility for any missunderstandings or third party damage.

18 Wednesday

Networking: Linked Seoul's Wine Down Wednesday; 7 pm-10 pm; linked-seoul.org

Exhibit: Joan Miro's paintings, drawings, sculptures @ Juliana Gallery; this is the last day; see exhibit page

19 - Thursday

Festival: Puchon Fantastic Film Festival @ Bucheon Citizens' Hall and City Hall, Bucheon; July 19-29; www.pifan.com

Social: Quiz night @ 3 Alley Pub in Itaewon; win beer; 3alleypub.com

Baseball: SK Wyverns vs LG Twins at Jamsil Stadium, Seoul; 6:30; www.mykbo.net

20 - Friday

Music: Mark Kozelek @ NH Art Hall near Seodaemun Station Stn. (line 5, ex. 6)

21 - Saturday

Music festival: Green Groove @ Boryeong, South Chungcheong Province; July 21-22; http://greengroove.net

Concert: "Sensation -The Ocean of White" @ KINTEX in Ilsan; 9 pm-6 am; http://www.sensation.com/korea

Excursion: Naejang-san National Park in Jeolla; July 21-22; 8 am; raskb.com

22 - Sunday

Music festival: Green Groove @ Boryeong, South Chungcheong Province; July 21-22; http://greengroove.net

Festival: Great Mountains Music Festival in Pyeongchang, Gangwon Province; July 21-Aug 11; www.gmmfs.com

Korea: TOPIK Exam; register June 12-25; www.topik.go.kr

23 - Monday

Food: Ongoing: Fish Market Tour, Vegan Taste Tour, Night Dining Tour; ongofood.com

24 - Tuesday

Food: Pasta night @ Craftworks in Noksapyeong (Tuesdays); http://craftworkstaphouse.com

Food: Wing night @ 3 Alley Pub in Itaewon; 3alleypub.com

25 Wednesday

Food: Cheese steak sandwich night @ Hollywood Grill in Itaewon; (02) 749-1659

Info: Free Seoul Busan bus daily except Monday; Seoul departure 8 am; Busan departure 4 pm; visitkorea@chesstours.co.kr

26 - Thursday

Festival: Buyeo Lotus Festival @ Seodong Park, South Chungcheong Province; July 26-29; www.buyeotour.net

Open mic: Open mic @ Orange Tree in HBC (Thursdays); (02) 749-8202

27 - Friday

Festival: Pohang Fireworks Festival @ Hyeongsangang Park, Pohang City; July 27–Aug. 5; http://festival.ipohang.org

Music Festival: Jisan Rock Festival @ Jisan Forest Resort, Icheon City; July 27-29; http://valleyrockfestival.mnet.com

28 - Saturday

Music Festival: Jisan Rock Festival @ Jisan Forest Resort, Icheon City; July 27-29; http://valleyrockfestival.mnet.com

Info: Open registration to volunteer through Itaewon Global Village Center; global.seoul.go.kr/itaewon

29 - Sunday

Beer: All things IPA @ Maloney's Pub in Seoul; (02) 3785-1670; 6 pm

Music Festival: Jisan Valley Rock Festival Jisan Forest Resort, Icheon City; July 27-29; http://valleyrockfestival.mnet.com

30 - Monday

Beer: 15,000 won all-you-can-drink beer @ Beer Garden, Renaissance Hotel (every day, 6-9 p.m.); (02) 2222-8630

31 - Tuesday

Baseball: Hanwha Eagles vs LG Twins at Jamsil Stadium, Seoul; 6:30; www.mykbo.net

All stories translated by Nathan Schwartzman at www.koreabeat.com and edited by Groove Korea for length and clarity. The opinions expressed here do not represent those of Groove Korea. — Ed.

Illegal hagwon crackdown finds 1,601 offenders

Dormitory-style hagwon have been caught offering illegal weekend lessons in violation of a law limiting lesson schedules to five days per week. Education authorities conducted a crackdown on hagwon from March through May in the Daechi-dong, Mok-dong and Junggye-dong areas of Seoul, as well as in the cities of Bundang, Ilsan, Busan and Daegu.

They discovered 22 illegal live-in hagwon. Six were in Gangnam and other parts of Seoul, 11 in Gyeonggi Province, two in South Gyeongsang Province, and one each in South Chungcheong Province, South Jeolla Province and Daegu.

In Gumsan, in South Chungcheong Province, one illegal "weekend camp" was found to be renting space in a motel for classes.

In Gangnam, prices at one school were 900,000 won for four weeks of lessons in a Friday-Saturday program. In South Gyeongsang Province, combined lesson and boarding fees were 550,000 won on average for weekend classes.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology said it plans to continue enforcing the law on hagwon nationwide to limit their classes to five days a week. Other hagwon were caught using study rooms for illegal lessons, operating unregistered classes, offering midnight lessons and using false or misleading advertising.

The Ministry investigated 21,950 hagwon and found 1,601 to be breaking the rules. Seventy had their operations suspended, seven had their registration suspended, 184 might face prosecution and the remaining 927 were given warnings. There were 389 cases in Seoul, 290 in Gyeonggi Province, 193 in Daegu, 118 in South Chungcheong Province, 91 in Incheon and 84 in Busan.

> "The Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology said it plans to continue enforcing the law on hagwon nationwide to limit their classes to five days a week."

Students bemoan lack of democracy

It has been 25 years since the first stones were laid in the foundation of Korean democracy. What are the memories held by the children born in 1987 — born into a new world of opportunity and freedom — of the June Democracy Movement? And to what degree has student society been democratized?

To answer these questions, the Korea Democracy Foundation held a 25th anniversary commemoration of the June Democracy Movement in which children of 1987 participated.

They generally agreed that society is still not fully democratized. "Through the Movement, we gained the right to elect the president, but since then many elections have been dominated by regionalism and it seems that the real meaning of that hard-fought victory has been hostility," said Kang Da-hye, a 25-year-old student.

Lee Ji-hye took interest in the rejection of Jo Yong-hwan's nomination to the Constitutional Court. "Mr. Jo was asked whether the Cheonan had been sunk by North Korea and he replied that because he had not personally witnessed the event, it would be improper for him to say it had been North Korea's doing. I think his subsequent rejection shows that our society is still not able to freely accept differing voices."

Students say incomplete democratization is evident in the ever-authoritarian university culture.

Lee Jae-yeong, 26, said that many traditional classes in medical school are still organized in a top-down fashion. "Even at student team-building sessions there are many times when the collecting of opinions is just a formality," he said. "During discussions, it is difficult for students to get a chance to speak."

The current problem, they agreed, is that student society is fragmented, leaving students with little leverage to take a stand on issues related to their education. "Everybody is upset about high tuition, but it's hard to get students interested in doing anything other than worrying about getting a job," said Kang. "Even if the student government has a vote on tuition, the school doesn't care and easily (ignores) it."

The students' top complaints were: unbearably high tuition, terrible living conditions and classes that are solely aimed at improving "specs" for the job market. Many say that student governments, which are supposed to press for improvement, accomplish very little.

"Recently our student government was silenced over issues it should have had a say in, such as corruption, and focused instead on which entertainers to bring to festivals," said Lee Jae-yeong.

Oh Won-chun sentenced to death

Last month, Judge Lee Dong-hun of the 11th criminal division of the Suwon District Court sentenced 41-year-old Oh Won-chun to death after his trial for the kidnap-murder of a young woman in Suwon.

It was a brutal crime that captivated the nation.

Police, meanwhile, are still trying to connect the killer to other crimes. At least one woman has come forward to police, saying Oh resembles a man that tried to abduct her. Seeing her claim as credible, police formed an investigatory team. A member of the police said that "after Mr. Oh's appearance was published we have received some tips that people were assaulted by a similar man… we plan to swiftly investigate all credible leads."

Korea still stingy in accepting refugees

A study has found that the Republic of Korea is stingy in recognizing refugees compared to other countries with comparable economic standings.

According to statistics published by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, by the end of 2011 over 3,900 people had applied for refugee status in the Republic of Korea, but only 401 had been successful in gaining recognition as refugees or given permission to stay for humanitarian reasons. Last year, 4.3 million people left their homes due to civil wars and other reasons, and 800,000 of them fell into the refugee category.

By the end of 2011, 15.42 million people had been granted refugee status out of 42.5 million applicants. Another 26.4 million had left their homes, 895,000 of whom are currently applying for refugee status.

KOREA BEAT

Woman clears man accused of killing her

A North Korean defector jailed in Cambodia will likely be freed soon after the woman he was accused of kidnapping and murdering sent a video to police in an effort to clear him of the crime. In it, she explained that she fled her employer at a North Korean restaurant, seeking freedom in a third country. One year ago, the woman, known only as Ms. Mun, disappeared while working in the restaurant in Cambodia.

The North Korean operators of the restaurant released security camera footage of Mr. Kim and Ms. Mun leaving together, which led to his subsequent arrest and the charges of kidnapping and murder.

In her video to police, Ms. Mun apologized to the accused man.

"Right now I am crossing the border into a third country where I will live in safety ... I am thinking of the Korean who has been arrested and feel responsible for it, and so now I am releasing this internet video to explain everything so that this incident may be correctly understood.

"I asked him to take me to a nearby shop, just asked it naturally, and once in the car I said I couldn't return to the restaurant and thoughtlessly went near the border and sincerely asked him to help me…"

Mr. Kim is currently detained in Cambodia and is waiting for his trial to begin at the end of this month.

Mr. Kim is a North Korean defector and is known to have received threats from North Korea since leaving. South Korea's government is expected to speak with him to reach a solution once Ms. Mun's video has been received by the court.

> "I asked him to take me to a nearby shop, just asked it naturally, and once in the car I said I couldn't return to the restaurant and thoughtlessly went near the border and sincerely asked him to help me…"

Woman kills self and two daughters

Last month a 38-year-old woman killed herself and her daughters, aged 6 and 7, in a hotel room in the Bujeon-dong neighborhood in Busan.

A 70-year-old employee alerted police after finding the bodies. The man said he entered their room after he thought it strange that the check-out time had passed and nobody had left the room. The woman checked in the previous day. He found three lifeless bodies side-by-side on the bed — the two little girls tucked in as if they were sleeping.

Police investigators determined that the daughters were strangled. The woman was found next to them — her throat sliced and covered in bandages. There was a suicide note, but its contents have not been released to the media. Based on a statement by her current partner — the girls' father — police believe that the woman was under tremendous stress because her ex-husband refused to sign divorce papers since they split eight years ago. Having been unable to place her daughters onto a family register (and thus legitimize them), she seemingly first killed her daughters and then herself. Police are interviewing potential witnesses and have asked for an autopsy of the bodies to determine the precise cause of death.

Man calls judge 'dog of American bastards'

The National Security Division of the National Police Agency detained 48-year-old Choi Dong-jin for questioning after he interrupted Seoul High Court proceedings by calling the judge a "dog of the American bastards" and threatened to kill him.

Consequently, police searched the home of Choi, who is editor of the pro-North Korea group Pan-Korean Alliance for Reunification, and found a considerable amount of banned material such as books praising North Korea, and are investigating whether he has violated the National Security Act.

The National Security Act makes illegal: communism; the recognition of North Korea as a political entity; organizations advocating the overthrow of the government; the printing, distributing and ownership of "anti-government" material; and any failure to report such violations by others.

Choi is accused of shouting the insults during a court session in which PKAR's 74-year-old leader Lee Gyu-jae and two others were appealing convictions. Police plan to seek an arrest warrant for Choi.

Choi was indicted in May of last year for violating the same law. That trial is underway. According to police, Choi said during his detention that "(President) Lee Myung-bak should be the one you (arrest). Why are you (arresting) me?"

'Room Salon Emperor' cases continue to climb

The major crimes division of the Seoul Central District Prosecutors Office has called in four police officers for questioning in the "Room Salon Emperor" Lee Gyeong-baek case.

On June 15, prosecutors called in Lieutenant Park, who is assigned to the Samseong-dong area of the Gangnam district, Lt. Goh of the Hanyang area, and two others.

The four are being investigated for accepting money, valuables, and other favors from Lee Gyeong-baek.

The "Room Salon Emperor list" was compiled by 40-year-old Lee Gyeong-baek, a prostitution industry heavyweight who said he handed out bribes to dozens of Seoul police officers.

NHRCK calls on China to release Korean activists

The National Human Rights Commission of Korea has called on China to immediately release North Korea human rights activist Kim Yeong-hwan and three colleagues. The commission published a petition on June 24 calling for the release of Kim Yeong-hwan, Kang Shin-sam, Lee Sang-yong and Yu Jae-gil. All four men were detained in China three months ago. Only Kim was permitted to have a consular meeting, and all subsequent requests for such visits have since been denied by the Chinese government.

The Chinese government has also refused to allow the four activists to consult with an attorney, which the Commission says violates the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The commission has called for Chinese authorities to grant the Korean men access to attorneys and for the Korean government to take an active role in securing their release.



INTO CHINA

NORTH KOREAN DEFECTORS RISK EVERYTHING TO ESCAPE TYRANNY

Story & Photos by Luc Forysth

Life for the average North Korean citizen is grim. Their dictator, Kim Jong-un, is ruthless, in the tradition of his father, and his father before him. The economy is anemic. Most of the population is poor. And without aid from its enemies, starvation would be widespread. It's no surprise, then, to read accounts of people so desperate to get out that they will risk not only their life, but also the lives of anyone they have had any sort of close relationship with. And since three armies (South Korean, North Korean and U.S.) fortify the southern border, the only way out of the world's last truly closed country is north, into China.

Would-be escapees must cross the Yalu (Amrok, in Korean) River and avoid detection by Chinese authorities on the other side. Beijing often repatriates North Koreans caught in China without proper documentation. Upon repatriation, the punishment is either death or detention. During the 100-day mourning period for the death of his father Kim Jong-il, Kim Jong-un mandated that anyone guilty of attempting to escape would be punished by having three generations of their family exterminated.

Once in China, the refugees begin the laborious process of trying to start a new life. Many head to South Korea via a third country, a route that usually takes them to Southeast Asia, some 3,000 kilometers away. Once in South Korea, they are given instant asylum and citizenship.

Following are interviews with two defectors who risked death and the safety of their families in North Korea to live in freedom abroad.

The first, Choi Joo-hual, is president of the Seoul-based Association of North Korean Defectors.



Choi Joo-hual

Occupation in North Korea: Worked for Ministry of the People's Armed Forces
Escaped North Korea: 1995
Arrived in South Korea: 1995
Path to freedom: Into China

I was born in Cheong-jin, in the province of North Hamgyeong, and moved to Pyeongyang when I was 9. I joined the military when I was 20. I worked for the Ministry of the People's Armed Forces, in the military diplomacy division, for 23 years. I also worked for the North Korean embassy in the Czech Republic from 1979 to 1983.

Now I am the president of the Association of North Korean Defectors. It was established in February 1999 and has around 10,000 members. Although most of them are in South Korea, some are North Korean defectors in a third country, like some countries in Southeast Asia. They find and contact us through the Internet.

Basically, the purpose of the association is to help North Korean defectors settle down in South Korea or other countries. We cooperate with the Ministry of Unification, especially with its Resettlement Support Division, as well as the North Korean Refugees Foundation, a governmental organization that helps North Korean defectors. There are also some companies that are helping our association. We set up jobs for North Korean defectors in collaboration with partner companies.

> Since I left, I have had no contact with my family, but I heard from someone I know that they were all sent to political prisoner camps.
>
> **— Choi Joo-hual**

Groove Korea: Why did you leave?
Choi Joo-hual: Something happened in 1994, which gave me a crucial motive to leave. Kim Jong-il summoned and executed with guns many of North Korea's military officials who had been working in other countries for a long time, claiming that they were contaminated by bourgeois ideas, or revisionism, so to speak. He thought they had changed while they were staying outside of North Korea. As they had been living out of the country for such a long time, they started to talk about the problems within North Korea while they hung out with each other, drinking alcohol. They complained about the regime and talked about reforms and opening up. Such conversations were somehow reported to the North Korean secret police, and they were arrested one by one. At first, one or two got caught. But while they were being investigated, they were forced to tell the police whom they were with when they were complaining about North Korea. So, more and more got caught, and were forced to inform.

I think the North Korean regime maintains its power solely through dictatorship, oppression and causing fear. Even when someone says a slightly negative thing about Kim Jong-il, regardless of how high a position he or she might have in society, Kim executes not only that person, but also his or her whole family — sometimes even three generations of the family. Since I left, I have had no contact with my family, but I heard from someone I know that they were all sent to political prisoner camps.

What is the most difficult thing about defecting to South Korea?

Cultural differences, and differences in educational background and knowledge, though I've changed now. Now I like American movies, and do not enjoy Russian and European movies, which I used to like in the past. Now I feel that those European movies are too slow. I mean, the plots and stories unfold too slowly, while in American movies they unfold very quickly. I liked "Transformers" and "Blue Streak," for example. I watch South Korean TV dramas, too. But I don't like those sorts of dramas about family matters, you know, about extramarital affairs and so on. I don't find them fun, and they make me feel sad. They remind of my family I had to leave in North Korea. Some South Korean TV dramas I enjoyed are "Giant" and "Salaryman Cho Han Ji."

Why are North Korean defectors reluctant to tell their stories?

Most North Korean defectors are afraid to disclose their identity, so they usually refuse interview requests from the media. Few defectors are willing to do an interview with a journalist. They are worried about possible danger to their families in North Korea. My family was sent to the labor camps because I worked for the Ministry, and it was clear that I had defected to South Korea. But in many cases, it is not clear to the North Korean government, and even to the defector's family members, whether the defectors really defected or just went missing.

So defectors want the government and their families to think that they are just missing because it is safer for (those left behind). In these cases, if a defector appears in South Korean media, the North Korean government will immediately know that they have defected and are not just missing. That's why they don't want to disclose their identity through media.

I've already been covered a lot by the media. I even held a press conference when I first came to South Korea. And I've been openly criticizing the North Korean government. And, as I said, my family has already been sent to the camps. That's why I can do this; my situation is different from most other defectors'.

What does the future hold for North Korea?

I think the regime will not be able to maintain its power unless they reform and open North Korea to the outside world. Not collapse, just change. They will change economically first, then politically. What I mean by political change is something similar to China. Of course, it will take time. It won't happen very soon. Maybe such changes will start four or five years from now.

Can you talk about forced repatriations of North Korean defectors by the Chinese?

(I protest) to prevent the forced repatriation of North Korean defectors by the Chinese. (The Chinese government sometimes returns suspected defectors to North Korea, where they face death or imprisonment).

Now that Hu Jintao, the president of China, and President Lee of Korea have talked about this issue, and Hu Jintao said he would consider this issue a humanitarian concern, I hope that from now on China will differentiate North Korean defectors and repatriate only some of them. What I mean by differentiate is that while some of the defectors want to come to South Korea, others defect just for economic reasons like searching for food or getting some money.

For example, some children who cross the border are just searching for something, maybe for their parents. If it is very clear that they did not intend to go to other countries, they will just receive light punishment, like labor or re-education. If they intended to go to South Korea, or some other countries, the punishment is heavy (if they are repatriated to the North).

> My family was sent to the labor camps because I worked for the Ministry, and it was clear that I had defected to South Korea. But in many cases, it is not clear to the North Korean government, and even to the defector's family members, whether the defectors really defected or just went missing. So defectors want the government and their families to think that they are just missing.
>
> **— Choi Joo-hual**



Kim "Loyalty" Choong-sung

Occupation in North Korea: Pop singer

Escaped North Korea: 2001
Arrived in South Korea: 2004
Path to freedom: Over the Yalu River, into China. Flew to Korea from Vietnam.

I am from Ham-heung in North Hamgyeong, a northern province in North Korea.

(For a while,) life in North Korea was okay because I was a pop singer. North Korean pop is like opera. I mean, North Korean pop singers learn a classical music style of singing. This is because in North Korea, singers should be able to sing without the help of a mic and speaker, like in the case of wartime, when no electricity would be available. There are governmental auditions, so if one has a talent in singing, the government gives him or her the chance to receive university education. "Loyalty" is not my original name. It was given to me by a missionary I met in China.

Loyalty is a word that appears frequently in the Bible. The missionary told me, "You've been loyal to Kim Il-sung, but now be loyal to God."

> My family has been arrested, and my brother got arrested recently — in March of this year. He got caught while he was talking with me on the phone.

Groove Korea: Why did you leave?

Kim Choong-sung: In other countries like Canada and South Korea, individuals can own gold, but in North Korea, they can't. All gold belonged to Kim Jong-il. So, if someone buys or sells gold, they are supposed to be executed. I had tried selling various things like salt, fish and clothes, but at some point I couldn't do it anymore because it was too hard (to earn a living). Around that time, someone told me that I would be able to make a profit if I sold gold, though it's dangerous. So I started selling gold, but got caught.

I got caught around the border between North Korea and China. And one day before I got caught, Kim Jong-il ordered a crackdown on gold sellers. He ordered executions. So I was about to be made an example of. I was told that I was going to be executed the next day. That night, I broke out of the jail, breaking the window that had steel bars. The room had nothing but a window. It took me 13 hours to break through the window with an iron ring I found.

How did you escape?

I crossed the border with eight other people. Among them, there were three women, a mother and a daughter, and another named Young-hee. Our nerves were on edge, worrying that we might get caught. We climbed mountains, walked through fields, paddies and swamps. In that way, we walked across the border.

After I crossed the border, I lived in China for two years. During that time, I visited North Korea once, secretly. While I was in China, I was living with two other North Korean defectors. A missionary was supporting us financially, but at some point he couldn't do it anymore. We got kicked out of the house because we were not able to pay the rent. So I parted with my companions. Soon I heard that they had been arrested by the Chinese police after getting into a fight with a Chinese taxi driver. I offered to (take their place in prison), so they were released. I did under the assumption that God would help me.

The police asked the taxi driver if he recognized me, if I was the person who had beaten him. And, of course, he said he didn't even know me. God helped me, and I was released.

There is a route from North Korea to China and then through Vietnam, Cambodia, Myanmar, and to Thailand, which is used by many North Korean defectors. Many finally come to South Korea via Thailand. But when I reached Vietnam, I couldn't go any further. When I arrived in Saigon, I was so exhausted that I couldn't walk anymore. I had walked for six months.

There were five shelters for North Korean defectors in Vietnam, where around 460 defectors had been protected. As there became too many, the South Korean government discussed (the situation) with the United Nations and decided to charter two planes and carry the defectors directly from Vietnam to South Korea. The planes took off on July 26, about six months after I arrived in Vietnam.

After I arrived in South Korea, I was interrogated by the South Korean government for three months, and then I got my South Korean citizenship.

What was the biggest difference between North Korea and South Korea?

First, the economy; and also that there is freedom here. In South Korea, people are not arrested even if they criticize the president. In North Korea, if someone calls Kim Jong-un just Kim Jong-un — I mean, without a proper title — they can get arrested. Another thing I like about South Korea is that here I can get rewarded for my hard work.

I work as a DJ for the Far East Broadcasting Company and I do some musical performances as well. Working as a singer (in North Korea) did put enough food on the table. In South Korea, I can get what my hard work deserves.

If I sing in South Korea as much as I did in North Korea, I would become rich. In North Korea, I sang 24/7, but I didn't get what my hard work deserved. Here, if I sing one song, I can get a certain amount of money, like 400,000 to 500,000 won. Somehow I was able to get jobs, but (for many North Koreans) it is very difficult.

A case like mine is rare, I think, because I worked as a singer. You know, music is universal. If you can read musical scores and have some basic skills related to music, you can work anywhere. As for most other North Koreans, what they learned in North Korea is useless in South Korea. So they usually do physical labor.

What does the future hold?

Ultimately, I hope the North Korean government collapses. Since I'm a missionary, I might go somewhere else, like Africa, after North Korea opens up. I will go wherever God wants me to go.

My family has been arrested, and my brother got arrested recently — in March of this year.

He got caught while he was talking with me on the phone. I don't know if he is going to be sent to a political prisoner camp or if he will be executed. He got arrested while I was protesting this March. I haven't talked to him since the arrest. All I've heard so far is that he was arrested. I sent to my family about $20,000, telling them to try to get him out of jail with that money. But it seems impossible. So I can't stop protesting. I should speak up more.

What keeps you motivated?

I'm (protesting) to raise awareness. I'm not trying to hide. It could be more dangerous, but it could be less dangerous, too. It's a bit of a gamble. Whether in Canada, the U.S., the U.K. or South Korea, individuals have freedom. But North Koreans do not have freedom. If they say something problematic, they get arrested, as there is no freedom of speech there. If they protest like I am doing now, they would get arrested and executed. There is no freedom of religion, either.

What I want to say is this: Everyone's life is equally valuable whether he or she is the president – you, me, a North Korean defector or a dying child in Africa.

In North Korea, most people's lives mean nothing. North Korea is a country only for 1 percent of the people. In any country, great media or journalists consider human, individual life to be the most important, not just big economic or political issues. I think a genuine journalist is one who focuses on and talks about human life.

This article, your pen, could save people in political prisoner camps in North Korea, including my brother. The subtle difference coming from your pen might kill or save a person.

> A case like mine is rare, I think, because I worked as a singer. You know, music is universal. If you can read musical scores and have some basic skills related to music, you can work anywhere. As for most other North Koreans, what they learned in North Korea is useless in South Korea. So they usually do physical labor.

Kill the dissenters, make no reforms, control the markets

Luc Forsyth is an Asia-based photojournalist. To see more of his work go to www.lucforsyth.com or follow him on twitter @LucForsyth. The opinions expressed here do not represent Groove Korea. To comment, e-mail opinion@groovekorea.com. — Ed.



Kim Il-sung (1912–1994)

Illogical. Irrational. Unpredictable. These are the kinds of words the outside world associates with North Korea and its dictatorial government. The infamous Kim family dynasty has been described as the world's only remaining communist monarchy. They rule over a malnourished population and command an enormous military funded by a broken economy. There are few countries on earth that garner as much international curiosity as North Korea, simply because so little is understood about it.

So how have three generations of Kim men maintained control for so long? Are they as irrational and unpredictable as they seem? What is actually happening in North Korea, and what does its present reality portend for its future?

"They are the best bunch of Machiavellians in existence," Andrei Lankov, professor of Korean studies at Kookmin University, said of North Korean leaders. "They know exactly what they are doing, and they have survived." Survival, according to Lankov, appears to be the main objective of the current North Korean regime. While 20 to 30 years ago grand aspirations of a unified Korean Peninsula under the control of Pyongyang may have existed, now it would seem that North Korea's elite are simply trying to ensure that they are able to die comfortably in their beds at an old age. Those in power (an estimated 1 million to 2 million of the country's approximately 25 million citizens) have become accustomed to rule and they have no desire to live out their days in exile — or worse. One of the more remarkable things about North Korea is the fact that it still exists.

Lankov remembers how people in the Soviet Union, as early as the 1980s, were speculating on how quickly the North Korean regime would collapse. The country was economically backwards even then; survival after the death of Kim Il-sung seemed extremely unlikely. It was thought that perhaps Hungary or the former Czechoslovakia would be among the few possible communist dictatorships able to stand the test of time, but while leaders like Tito and Husák (Hungary and Czechoslovakia, respectively) have long since been deposed and vilified in the passages of history, the Kim family marches on. Though by relative global standards the North Korean elite cannot be considered fabulously rich, living perhaps as luxuriously as a high-level "chaebol" (conglomerate) businessman, they are certainly comfortable. And they have gotten used to their power.

With the death of his father, Kim Jong-un now has the precarious job of maintaining his family legacy. While some speculate that his Western education in Switzerland may encourage him to reinvent North Korea following the Chinese example, there would be major obstacles in his way. According to Professor Lankov, there are four foundational principles which the Kim family have used to hold dominion since the 1970s, and it would be exceptionally difficult to break from them. An inexperienced and untested leader, Kim Jong-un is heavily influenced by his advisors, many of whom are left over from his grandfather's administration. "There is no one in the government who could be considered Kim Jong-un's drinking buddy. They are relics of the '60s and '70s and he has to follow them," said Lankov.

There is no way to know if Kim likes or hates this situation, but it's clear that the same policies will continue for the foreseeable future.

> Any reforms initiated by Kim Jong-un would necessarily open North Korea to the outside world, exposing North Koreans to mind-blowing pictures of South Korean success.

No reforms

There has been speculation that North Korea has been on the cusp of reform since the 1980s, yet very little has happened. While logic might suggest that the surest way to reinvigorate the dismal North Korean economy would be to institute gradual reforms, as China did after the death of Mao, there is one major obstacle standing in the way: South Korea.

In China's case, there was no South China to contend with. South Korean citizens are estimated to make between 15 and 40 times more income than their Northern neighbors. Even if the more conservative estimate is true, this is still the largest disparity in wealth of any two countries in the world that share a land border. Any reforms initiated by Kim Jong-un would necessarily open North Korea to the outside world, exposing North Koreans to "mind-blowing pictures of South Korean success," Lankov asserted. "Though South Koreans will admit that there are problems in their (own) society, from a North Korean's view, it is a very attractive life."

From a dictator's perspective, this poses some serious problems. Unlike in China, where the Chinese population was aware of the successes of the outside world, North Koreans have been largely insulated from international awareness. The Chinese were aware that countries like the United States enjoyed very different circumstances than they did, and they did not blame their government for not matching American prosperity. North and South Korea, however, were the same country until Japan ceded control over the former colony after World War II, and they were dealing with the same economic circumstances until the 1960s. Opening North Korea's borders after roughly 50 years of isolation would lead to a veritable tidal wave of information into the isolated country. Images of South Korean prosperity would reflect poorly on the North Korean regime and place the blame for their dismal situation squarely on their shoulders. North Korean citizens will certainly demand to know why they are malnourished and poor while their neighbors to the South are well-fed and rich beyond imagination.

"Even if (North Koreans) prove to be the best geniuses in the history of economics, it will not be enough. The North Korean people will be impatient, and they will want (improved living standards) now," Lankov said. There will be a general sentiment that if they unite with South Korea they will immediately be given the same quality of life that the South enjoys. The likely result is an aggressive push to reunify as quickly as possible and the swift deposition of the current North Korean regime. From the perspective of Kim Jong-un and his advisors, this must be a terrifying prospect.

Following the breakup of the Soviet Union, it was typically the former elites who gained the most. They were experienced, wealthy, politically savvy, and they had connections. They prospered more after the dissolution of the Soviet empire than they ever could have under the communist party apparatus. This would not be the case for the elites of the North, who fear a vengeful South. According to Lankov, the North Koreans know how they would have treated the South Koreans had they won the war, and they have no reason to expect anything different from a victorious South. The elites love their families like everyone else, which is why they won't change. They are well aware of the demise of the Gadaffi family in Libya, and they do not want to suffer the same fate. From their perspective, reforms equal suicide.

"Find me an elite in the world who is happy about surrendering power," said Lankov. "It is nice for us to talk about reforms while we are enjoying a latte, but for these people it is a matter of life and death. Even if their chances of survival are 50 percent, they are not likely to take the gamble, simply because they love their families. But I put their chances well below 50 percent."

Let them eat nukes

North Korea's nuclear capabilities have been a staple issue of the international press for years, with the most recent ballistic missile test dominating CNN around the clock for weeks. This coverage is, in fact, exactly what the North Korean regime wants.

Nuclear weapons mean security, and when it comes to security, the Kim family and their advisors are decidedly more paranoid than most. They have seen what happened in Afghanistan and Iraq; they are well aware that a conventional army, no matter how large, cannot stand against the overwhelming financial and technological superiority of the United States and its allies. And unlike in those Middle Eastern nations where the locals fight fiercely to repulse the foreign invaders, after decades of totalitarian rule the Kim family has no reason to believe that



Kim Jong-il (1941-2011)

North Korea's citizens will engage in a sustained guerilla war on their behalf. Having watched fellow dictators around the world being steadily deposed, the North Korean regime knows that nuclear weapons alone will save them. Gaddafi's Libya would not have fallen so easily — if at all — had it been in control of a similar nuclear arsenal. The insurgency in Libya greatly depended on NATO forces, intelligence and air support, and it seems unlikely that this assistance would have been so eagerly provided had there been a threat of nuclear retaliation. Had the Libyan government possessed such weapons, "Gaddafi would probably now be enjoying a nice supper after spending a few hours in the torture chambers talking with former pro-democracy (rebels)," Lankov said.

While the sentiment of "let them eat nukes" has been echoed somewhat ironically by political and military analysts when talking about North Korea, this is essentially what they have been doing for the last two decades.

Stalinist economies typically enjoyed an initial period of success lasting for 10 or 20 years; but once dead, it cannot be resurrected. This is the position North Korea finds itself in: unable to revive its economy, and perpetually on the brink of starvation.

Estimates say that between 5 and 5.5 million tons of grain are needed to keep the North Korean population alive, yet they are capable of producing only 4.2 to 4.8 million tons on their own. This difference has to be made up somewhere.

Enter nuclear-driven blackmail.

According to the World Food Organization, around 700,000 tons of grain are being supplied to North Korea annually, the bulk of which comes from the U.S., Japan and South Korea — three countries which North Korea is technically at war with. Kim Il-sung started a policy of agreeing to suspend nuclear program development as long as payments continued. North Korea's enemies continue to keep the isolated nation alive. North Koreans are, essentially, eating nuclear weapons.

Kill the dissenters

Contrary to media portrayals in recent years, North Korea has actually become a less repressive place to live, according to Lankov. There are things done today that were unthinkable under the rule of Kim Il-sung. If a North Korean is caught trying to enter China, they are rigorously investigated to see if they have had contact with South Koreans or Christian missionaries — those most often responsible for assisting defectors in reaching a safe country — but they are not automatically executed, as had been common in the past.

If interrogators cannot conclusively prove that defection was intended, the punishment is "between two months and one year in prison — more or less arbitrary, depending on how much they dislike you. (Under Kim Il-sung) this would have meant five years at least, and lifelong discrimination," said Lankov. Before 1997, all family members of a suspected defector would have been sent to a prison camp and not released until the accused was acquitted — which was usually never. Now, in most cases, the families are not jailed, though they are harshly discriminated against and quickly removed from Pyongyang — a city reserved for the most loyal, elite North Koreans. Despite these changes, the country is one of the world's most unforgiving when it comes to punishment. Various estimates put the number of prisoners in North Korea at 150,000, some 0.6 percent of the population. To put this figure into perspective, the Soviet Union under Leonid Brezhnev never had more than 1,000 political prisoners at any one time, even though the population was 10 times that of North Korea. Only Stalin's Soviet Union comes close to matching North Korea's incredible incarceration rate, a period in history synonymous with fear and cruelty.

"So, they do not tolerate dissent. And they should not," said Lankov. "With South Korea so close and an incurable economic crisis, any attempt to tolerate dissent could lead to instability and collapse. They allow nothing that is not approved by the government, and if they want to live to be old men, they should not."

> I would not be surprised if we learned tomorrow that there are riots (in North Korea). But I would be equally unsurprised if in 2027 we are discussing the 25th successful long-range nuclear missile test. Being outsiders, we know only that their system is rotten, but not how seriously. We just can't know.
>
> **— Professor Andrei Lankov**

Control the markets

Though North Korea has not reformed, this is not to say that it has not changed. The country that Kim Jong-un presides over is drastically different than the one his grandfather left— the most notable difference being the market economy.

Under Kim Il-sung, North Korea's economy was totally controlled by government distribution. Nothing was bought or sold for decades. The government decided how much food a person could eat, how often their diet included meat, and even how many pairs of shoes were issued. Modern North Korea, however, has a greatly reduced industrial output, and the government no longer has the resources to dominate the marketplace as it once did.

Some estimates suggest that up to 70 percent of a North Korean household's total income is now derived from outside the state economy in the black market. "It is like African capitalism," Lankov said. "It is illegal, but many people are smuggling, (engaging in) household manufacturing, or (running) small workshops."

Private businesses are disguised as state operations, and state officials are themselves black market traders. Officially all businesses must belong to the government, but bribery and corruption allow a private economy to exist and expand. Obviously not desirable from a despotic regime's point of view, this sort of grassroots economy is dangerous in the long run as people learn that they can make a living independent of government participation.

Illegal markets are becoming increasingly common, and are hotbeds for the spread of rumors about the outside world, criticisms of the state and even South Korean pop culture.

The government is, for these reasons, constantly trying to regulate and close these markets, only for them to reappear and expand.

It is an economic whack-a-mole; the government crushes capitalism, and then the market counters. To hold on to power, the North Korean regime must find a way to control these markets, but not excessively so.

After the disastrous 2009 currency reform, when government intervention caused the value of the North Korean won to increase 10,000 percent overnight, leading to mass inflation and economic collapse, they have realized that too much control could be their undoing.

This is an extremely fine and precarious line that Kim Jong-un and his advisors must now walk, made even more difficult by a population that is becoming relatively defiant.

For the first time in North Korea's history, people are ignoring government decrees regarding the market, and laws are becoming difficult to enforce. Technically, men are prohibited from being merchants, and women over the age of 50 are forbidden from trading, but these regulations are all but ignored.

Though the persecution of political dissenters is still vigorously enforced, the state officials who are supposed to enforce the laws regarding economic control are sabotaging them.

These low-level officials are in fact making most of their income from the market traders they are tasked with repressing.

According to Lankov, "If (the official) succeeds in his duty, he is limited to 540 grams of wheat per day. But if he takes money from the traders, he can eat meat every day. Does he want to do his job?

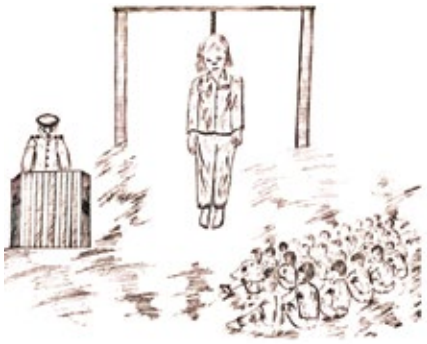
"Of course not, he is human."

Life in political prison camps

Source: NKnet — Network for North Korean Democracy and Human Rights
Images drawn by North Korean defectors



Daily rations in the detention center are 100g of bean-rice and salted soup. During their 30 minutes of sunshine-time, hungry inmates try to eat weeds, but if they are caught by a guard, they may be beaten to death. If a person is sent to a detention center, he must rest on his knees from 5 a.m. to midnight. The person can only stand to eat and go to the bathroom.



Kim Hye-suk, who was imprisoned at Bukchang Political Prison 18, was forced to witness a colleague's mother being executed by hanging for engaging in religious activities in the camp. Public executions are imposed on inmates who are arrested for attempting escape, failure to follow orders or committing sabotage, without trial and in front of all other inmates.



In mid-July 1988, dozens of inmates at Kaechon Political Prison Camp 14 were swept away by floods after an embankment collapsed during heavy rains while they were building a power plant.



An escapee forcibly repatriated from China is stoned to death by fellow inmates.



An inmate from Bukchang Political Prison Camp 18 was arrested and executed for stealing corn from Kaechon Political Prison Camp 14.

Types of torture

Source: NKnet — Network for North Korean Democracy and Human Rights
Images drawn by North Korean defectors



Pigeon torture — An inmate is hung from his hands and feet for a long period of time.



Burning torture — Shin Dong-hyuk, a defector, suffered severe burns from torture when he was 14 after his mother and brother tried to excape.



Tip of finger cut off — Shin Dong-hyuk, a defector, had the tip of his finger cut off when he was an inmate at Camp 14.



Beatings — Some inmates are beaten with a 5-8 cm-thick wooden stick.



Pumping exercise — Torture by being forced to repeatedly sit down and stand up until one loses consciousness.

The dawning of awareness

Contrary to common assumptions, modern North Koreans are not completely cut off from the outside world, as the previous generations were. While tunable radios are banned (all radios must, by law, have their tuners fixed to government stations), cheap, Chinese-made DVD players are not a rarity. At approximately $30, a DVD player costs almost as much as an average North Korean earns in a month. Though not cheap, it's not overly expensive either — an investment comparable to buying a used car in South Korea, for example. It's certainly not something found in every home north of the 38th parallel, but a realistic purchase for a substantial cross-section of society.

Ostensibly permitted so citizens can enjoy biopics of their Dear Leaders, DVD players have given North Koreans the chance to glimpse the outside world through the lens of martial arts films from Hong Kong and dramas from South Korea. The cultural impact of the humble DVD is great. Half a century ago, Korean was spoken on the Korean Peninsula, but now there are essentially two languages: South Korean and North Korean. However, Lankov's colleagues in North Korea have reported that South Korean parts of speech and forms of address are starting to permeate the North Korean dialect.

The political ramifications of such international awareness are obviously undesirable from the regime's point of view, which has spent decades indoctrinating its people in the evil ways of its Southern neighbor. North Korean propaganda about the South has been so pervasive that many citizens are unable to believe all of what they see in the imported dramas. For them, the notion that nearly every South Korean household can afford a car is contrary to what they have been told. Just as the North Korean government greatly exaggerates the opulence of its nation, they expect the South Korean government to do the same. But, as Lankov points out, "they do understand there are some things that cannot be faked — the cityscape of Seoul, for example. It is beginning to dawn on them that South Korea is doing well."

This dawning awareness of South Korea's modern success can be seen in the evolving propaganda methods employed by the Kim administration. While they once asserted that the South was so poor that students had to sell their blood to pay for textbooks, they are reluctantly admitting that South Koreans are not, in fact, impoverished.

Traditional propaganda campaigns followed the communist model of portraying North Korea as an industrial powerhouse, glorifying steel mills and smoke stacks while showing South Korea as a place of thatch houses, unpaved roads and sinister-looking American soldiers. Now, however, the trend seems to have reversed, with the South depicted as a hellish inferno of pollution and suffocating toxic clouds. Conversely, North Korea is shown to be a pristine natural paradise through posters of political leaders interacting with common citizens in verdant fields and crystal clear mountain streams. One particular campaign featured a cartoon turtle that was dying in the chemical wastelands of South Korea, and so was forced to flee to the pure waters of the North where he happily splashed for ever after.

> Estimates say that between 5 and 5.5 million tons of grain are needed to keep the North Korean population alive, yet they are capable of producing only 4.2 to 4.8 million tons on their own. This difference has to be made up somewhere. Enter nuclear driven blackmail. The bulk of the shortfall comes from the U.S., Japan, and South Korea — three countries which North Korea is technically at war with.

The future

Claiming to know the future of North Korea for certain is hubris, but based on the current trends, and testimonials from recent defectors, it is possible to speculate with some hope of accuracy. What is clear is that North Korea is changing, and in a typical communist dictatorship, change marks the beginning of the end. Unfortunately for the Kim dynasty, the end will be harsh and very likely violent, Lankov predicts.

"I talk with the North Koreans a lot, roughly four or five times per week," said Lankov, "and what is clear is that people who are now in their 20s and early 30s have very different ideas from their parents.

They know North Korea is a poor place and they are (relatively) less afraid of the government. They no longer feel the Kim Jong-il method is the only method. While these people are still young, they will soon become the majority."

Ironically, the North Korean regime's enemies are preventing its collapse; outside powers do not want the status quo to change.

China fears the millions of Korean refugees that would flood over the border into historically disputed territory. The U.S., meanwhile, would likely be forced to abandon a strategically important military position on the Korean Peninsula. Japan might be the only country with something to gain from an all-out North Korean collapse.

South Korea, the nation that would seemingly be most eager to end the war, is perhaps the most wary of reuniting.

Though lip service is usually paid in favor of reunification, a significant number of youth in the South will admit that while they support the idea in theory, they do not want to deal with the realities — namely the huge cost to South Korean taxpayers. "I definitely support reunification," said Hwang In-gi, a graduate student in Seoul, "as long as we don't have to pay for it."

This may sound like a heartless attitude, but South Koreans have worked exceptionally hard over the last five decades to transform their country into an economic success.

For the average taxpayer, the cost of reunification would be substantial. If the United States annexed all of Central America, for example, and then asked American citizens to pay for the cost of modernizing and improving the quality of life in the new territories, there would be predictable outrage.

Asking South Koreans to pay for reunification is much the same except that in this case, North Korea has been threatening to kill them — and in hundreds of cases succeeding — for the last 70 years.

Though South Koreans might not want to rush into reunification, North Korea will inevitably collapse. Exactly how is a matter of debate, but Lankov suggested several possibilities: An overly zealous police officer could go too far with a physical punishment and spark a violent riot which would spread across the country, forcing Kim Jong-un and his elites into exile.

Perhaps elements of the military that have less of a stake in the regime will decide it is time for a change in the power structure and stage a coup. It is even possible that Kim Jong-un secretly desires to implement massive reforms and pursue political and economic models that he studied while living in Switzerland.

Maybe he has a bleeding heart and just wants his people to be happy. It is impossible to know.

But no matter what happens, sooner or later something will; the system is too broken and unstable to last forever.

"I would not be surprised if we learned tomorrow that there are riots (in North Korea)," said Lankov. "But I would be equally unsurprised if in 2027 we are discussing the 25th successful long-range nuclear missile test. Being outsiders, we know only that their system is rotten, but not how seriously. We just can't know."

About the interviewee: Andrei Lankov is a professor of Korean studies at Seoul's Kookmin University. As a citizen of the former Soviet Union, he was able to complete some of his undergraduate studies in Pyongyang as part of an educational exchange. This has given him a unique perspective on North Korea, the country that is arguably the most talked about in the news, while also being the least understood. Andrei is also a columnist for the Korea Times. Luc heard him speak about the world's last isolated nation during the Network for North Korean Democracy and Human Rights conference in Seoul.



Kim Jong-un (Birth year unknown)

The menace of 'foreign peril' media

Expats in Korea take a stand

By Rob Ouwehand **/ Illustration by** Adela Ordoñez



In the last days of May, a blogger found a report aired by a major Korean television network titled "The shocking reality about relationships with foreigners." It accused foreign men of being creeps, and Korean women of being too easily seduced by foreign cads. He posted the video, with English subtitles, on his page, Scroozle.com. On May 31, a Facebook group of people outraged by the video was formed, and by June 5 it had gained 8,000 members.

Those facts alone reveal a few things: First, there is a problem with accountability and outdated attitudes at this particular media organization. Second, Korea's media is no longer watched only by Koreans, and the non-Koreans watching television have the Korean-language ability to translate, and the perspective to demand the media abandon race-baiting sensationalism. Third, there are a lot of people who want to see change. These three facts alone should give the news company heads serious pause.

As Korea enjoys an ever-higher profile in commerce (Hyundai and Samsung), culture (K-pop and dramas), and events (G20 and the Olympics), the pre-G20 Summit public campaign slogan echoes louder than ever: "The World Is Watching." And what does the world see? In "The shocking reality about relationships with foreigners," the world sees harsh sexism in a public forum: The report's attitude that Korean women are so easily fooled by foreign men infantilizes women and deeply insults the freedom and intelligence of Korea's dynamic, diverse, self-aware and self-determining female population.

The social context in Korea only adds urgency: Migrant workers, expat populations, international marriages and biracial children are all increasing in numbers, and if Korea's institutions are not ready to handle diversity, and to train Korea's youth to re-imagine Korea as a diverse country, the next generation will be a rocky one.

The opinions expressed here do not represent those of Groove Korea. To read more of Rob's writings, go to his blog at http://roboseyo.blogspot.com. — Ed.

The report's attitude that Korean women are so easily fooled by foreign men infantilizes women and deeply insults the freedom and intelligence of Korea's dynamic, diverse, self-aware and self-determining female population.

It is good to offer language classes for migrants, but on the other side, introducing to Koreans the idea of a Korea that includes more than just pure-blooded ethnic Koreans will make this country feel more welcoming for the various people who call it home.

As the Canadian husband of a Korean wife, and the father of a Korean child, this program hurts me, and those like me, who are making Korea our long-term home, because of the narrative beneath it: that foreign things are a threat to Korea's purity. The purity these ideas promote is a purity that focuses on exclusion: Drawing a line around "pure" Korea and defending it. Unfortunately, that pure Korea does not exist. First of all, Koreans have traveled to and from other parts of Asia through all Korean history: Korea's literary and historical documents are mostly written in Chinese, and its traditional cultural roots come from China (Confucianism) and India (Buddhism). Koreans who say all foreign influences are negative, or that traditional Korea had none, are incorrect.

If our day-to-day behavior in our own neighborhoods contradicts a "foreign peril" story like this one, our Korean friends will shake their heads and trust their own eyes more than the TV narrative. If our day-to-day behavior is ugly, like the behavior featured in these sensationalist hack-jobs, then such a news story becomes a confirmation instead of a contradiction.

The task of achieving a "glocal" (global and local) society occurs on two levels. One level is the macro, large-scale level: the politics, the policy and the media representation of Korea's diverse population must be addressed. It is time for expats to become more organized. Those with language skill and cultural understanding, those with influence and connections, need to take up this cause, and reach out to Korean proponents of healthy diversity, to have a voice in policies, to assert that we are stakeholders in Korea, too, and to influence media to take a more welcoming, inclusive perspective of Korea. Embassies, chambers of commerce and individuals must align with government ministries, civic groups, NGOs, lawmakers and agenda-setters to play a more active role in the official and public versions of Korea's growing diversity.

The second level is the micro, small-scale level: Every expat and migrant in Korea lives in a neighborhood and interacts with Koreans every day. And every Korean who deals with non-Koreans balances what they see in the media about expats against experiences they have with the expats they meet. If our day-to-day behavior in our own neighborhoods contradicts a "foreign peril" story like this one, our Korean friends will shake their heads and trust their own eyes more than the TV narrative. If our day-to-day behavior is ugly, like the behavior featured in these sensationalist hack-jobs, then such a news story becomes a confirmation instead of a contradiction, prejudices deepen and we must take some of the blame ourselves.

It is up to every one of us to set a good example.

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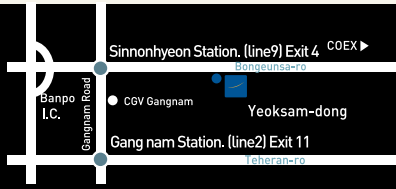
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Who do you love?

A Korean student responds to the MBC controversy

Story by Byun Bo-kyung **/ Photo by** R.M. Adamson

When "The shocking reality about relationships with foreigners" was aired by the TV network MBC in late May, it caused a great deal of controversy among the expat community with its portrayal of foreign men who date Korean women as opportunistic, lewd and diseased criminals. The producers buttressed the bogus segment with ambiguous situations, uncited phone-interviews with female "victims," and provocative language. But putting the ridiculousness of the "report" aside for a moment, the segment made me think of something that happened a few weeks ago at my prep school in Seoul, which may provide a glimpse of what Korea's youth think about dating and mating.

One afternoon during the last precious minutes of breaktime before the class bell, a friend and I launched into a heated debate over our ideal type. According to her, brown-haired guys were the best and my own preference for sandy blondes was written off as the sad result of having watched one too many chick flicks. Just when I was about to retaliate, I could hear the guy next to me chuckling, obviously having overheard our not-so-private conversation. In defense, I asked whether he really liked plain black hair, expecting him to concede a weakness for wide blue eyes or blonde curls. Yet quickly and casually he responded, "She has to be Korean." This was coming from a guy who had spent 11 years of his life in the U.S.

Baffled and curious, I bombarded him with a bunch of whispered follow-up questions throughout class to find out his reasoning. His opinion seemed more innate than contemplated, though, because he couldn't seem to articulate a clear response: "Non-Koreans just can't understand us," and "Society seems to discourage international relationships" was the best I could get out of him.

Still bemused, and only half-believing him, I spent the next few days trying to gather whether my other male classmates had ever considered having a relationship with a non-Korean woman. But it didn't matter how many I asked — not one of them were completely comfortable with the idea of marrying, or, in some cases, even dating a foreigner.

I was shocked given that my Global Leadership Program (GLP) class is one specialized for students planning to study abroad, especially at high-ranking American universities.

Many of us do volunteer work abroad, participate in international conferences, and take GLP classes — which are basically intensive English composition and literature courses. On top of that, most of my classmates have already spent more years abroad than the average Korean (many parents are professors, diplomats and businesspeople who've studied and worked overseas).

Apparently, their past and planned future exposure to foreign culture has little influence on their conservative beliefs regarding international relationships. Taking this into account, I could begin to imagine what a person who had spent his entire life in conservative Korean society with zero foreign exposure would think about foreign men dating Korean women — especially if he or she happened to be a scoop-hungry yellow journalist.

Historical factors

So perhaps this conservative mentality contributed to the making of the MBC "report." But there are definitely other influences that led to such biased — even xenophobic — reporting, namely historical and Confucian factors. To begin with, it is important to recognize that it has only been about 60 years since Korea gained independence from Japanese colonial rule. From 1910 to 1945, Japanese imperialists tried to assimilate Koreans as "imperial subjects" by stripping Koreans of their national identity: They required Koreans to take on Japanese names, banned the use of Korean at school, and forced Shinto worship. Such oppressive policies were justified through a theory, which claimed that Japanese and Koreans shared essentially the same roots, but that Koreans were comparatively inferior. Thus Japan urged Koreans to forsake their inferior culture and traditions to become respectable "imperial subjects."

From what I've seen, being the wife of a man who is "Korean" to the bone is taxing, to say the least. All housework and parenting duties fall under the exclusive charge of the wife, regardless of whether or not she has a career.

In retaliation against such propaganda, leaders of the Korean independence movement strived to preserve national unity by rallying around the idea that Koreans were part of a single, pure bloodline. This idea seeped deep into Korean mentality, and people gradually came to consider their supposedly unified, homogeneous ancestry and culture a source of great pride. As a result, Koreans became inclined to bond amongst themselves while driving out foreign forces; to behave in a way that challenged the concept of Korean unity was regarded as treachery toward one's country as well as one's people. This idea was further reinforced throughout the late half of the 20th century, as dictators such as Syngman Rhee and Park Chung-hee used the ideology of a unified nation to justify individual sacrifice for national unity. And now, as the MBC report testifies, distorted interpretations of national unity and pride are manifesting themselves in the form of xenophobia.

Furthermore, Confucian values heavily shape the minds of Koreans (and in patriarchal Confucian society, chastity was considered a top virtue in women). Naturally, men were enraged when some Korean women started working as prostitutes for American soldiers stationed in Korea after the Korean War. Relationships of any kind with foreign soldiers were considered shamefully shocking, a disgrace to the family name. Though much time has passed since then, the idea still remains and colors the perception of international couples even to this day.

Thus, historical and ideological factors predisposed Koreans to lean toward ethnic nationalism, and to condemn those who act in an un-"Korean" way as unpatriotic, disloyal, and even morally corrupt — as was obviously the MBC show's view toward Korean women dating foreign men.

An anachronism

Though ethnic pride might have been the key to uniting against turmoil in the past, it is somewhat of an anachronism in today's globalized world. Radical forms of ethnic nationalism actually serve to cripple diversity and open-mindedness — even now, problems concerning the abuse of immigrant workers, multicultural families, and injustices caused by jus sanguinis policies have become leading social issues in Korean society. As Koreans increasingly live and interact with foreigners, they will have to learn to understand cultural differences and ethnic diversity to assimilate with people of other countries.

Pride in one's heritage is commendable, but not when it leads to bias or false accusations (or morphs into nationalism). Koreans seem to love looking "global"; many students, me included, enter "international" essay contests, participate in English debates and seek to study abroad; the country strives to hold international events like the World Cup, the G20 and the Olympics; the government and media flaunt any favorable global rankings. It's now time they really became as "global" as they claim to be. In a world where people of different races intermingle on a daily basis, open-mindedness is a virtue. I guess the boys in my class — and too many Koreans — have yet to fully internalize this fact.

As for the girls in my class, they seem to be much more liberal. Perhaps it's because they want to avoid the traditional duties expected of Korean women. Whatever the reason, almost all of them chirped an enthusiastic yes when asked whether they were willing to have a relationship with a non-Korean. Some even remarked that they preferred foreigners over Korean men.

Knead, chop, mix and fry

From what I've seen, being the wife of a man who is "Korean" to the bone is taxing, to say the least. All housework and parenting duties fall under the exclusive charge of the wife, regardless of whether or not she has a career (my mom's a pharmacist). It is also taken for granted that she help prepare for ancestral rites of her in-laws, held at least twice a year. On such occasions, the men gather around in the living room, chat and watch TV while the women knead, chop, mix and fry in a frenzy to prepare traditional dishes for the ancestral rites table.

My mom always emerges from such ordeals with menthol pain-relief patches on her shoulders, vowing not to take part in such "madness" next year — and yet she joins her sister-in-laws in the kitchen every ancestral rite season. Social expectations and pressure from family members — recruiting phone calls from sisters-in-law, for instance — are not easy to ignore; having observed this since childhood, I hardly want to submit to such ordeals myself. And because there are "plenty more fish in the sea," many Korean women (me and my friends included) feel no need to restrict ourselves to conservative, traditional (and often chauvinistic) Korean men merely because of the fact that they happen to have the same nationality.

Of course, this is only speaking in general terms: Liberal-minded Korean men exist, as do conservative foreign men. Also, my viewpoint may not necessarily represent that of the majority. I can still remember the incredulous look in my classmate's eyes when I told him I preferred foreigners (or perhaps Koreans with foreign experience) to completely "Korean"-Koreans (those called "tojung," having never left the peninsula) when it comes to having a relationship.

So MBC, make of it what you will; surely there's a scandalous scoop here. Meanwhile, I'll defer to my friend who once said, "The world is large, and men are plenty." I think I'll take my chances with non-Korean guys, be they the incarnation of pure evil or not.

The author's opinions do not necessarily represent those of Groove Korea. — Ed.



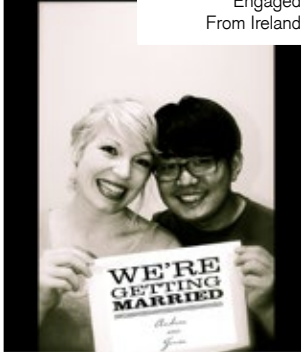
Bo-kyung is a senior at Daewon Foreign Language High School in Seoul. This piece was reprinted with permission from The Three Wise Monkeys webzine (www.thethreewisemonkeys.com).

THE TRUTH ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS WITH FOREIGNERS



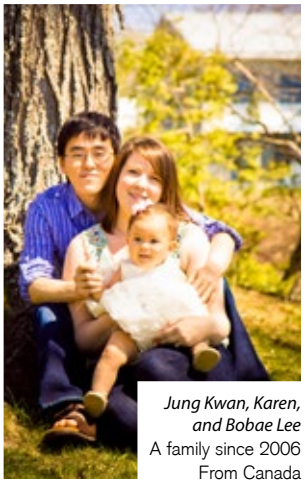


Andrea Joyce and Jinsu Park
Engaged
From Ireland





Mike Dirks & Kim Do-won
Married in 2008
From Canada



Jung Kwan, Karen, and Bobae Lee
A family since 2006
From Canada



Andre Kolodochka and Hyejung Cho
Married for 13 years
From Ukraine



Kirsty Clausen and Do Hong Gil
Marred four years
From Australia



Dana Archer and Jinju Lee
Engaged
Live in Chungju

I was really disappointed to see the MBC show about foreigners and thought they were very irresponsible in their journalism. As a media outlet, they have an opportunity to reach a large number of people and I am concerned that the general public will begin to have a negative feeling toward foreign men because of the biased opinions in this article. I won't deny that some foreign men behave this way, however it is not all foreign men or all foreigners. It takes two people to engage in this behaviour — the man and the woman.



Aaron M. Coyle and Huh Keong-Ah
Married 16 years
From New York



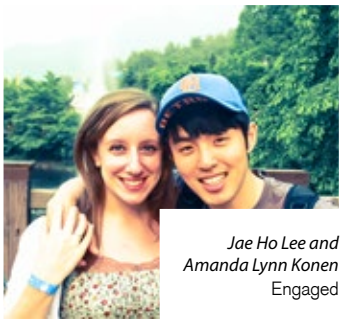
Luke Sanders and Yujin Han
Married one year
From the U.K.

Donald Anderson and Yeoyoung Lim
Married five years
From Canada





Lara Tosh and Young Bae Ahn
Married six years
From Canada



Jae Ho Lee and Amanda Lynn Konen
Engaged

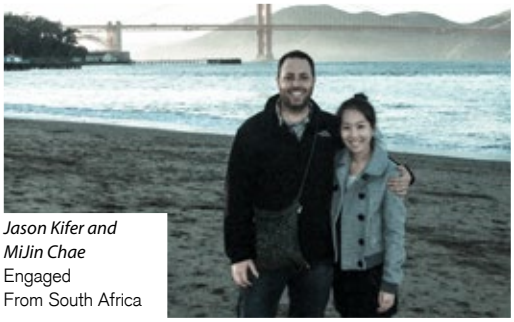
As a happily married, permanent resident, taxpayer and voter in Korea, I'm thoroughly disappointed in their choice to air a racist broadcast. It's sickening that they're spreading such an image of Korea around the world — their choice is both an embarrassment to and an attack upon all residents and citizens who call this country home.



Josh Yochem and Yu Il Han
Engaged
From USA



Miguel, Sora and Ian Toress
Married 4 years
From Ecuador



Jason Kifer and MiJin Chae
Engaged
From South Africa



Thomas Duvernay and Moon-ok Lee
Married 28 years
From United States

My wife and I have been happily married now for 28 years. We have a son who, until recently, was the youngest person in Korean history to enter the university; at the age of 25, he has already finished his Ph.D. studies in linguistics and is now a professor at the Catholic University of Korea in Bucheon. I campaigned for the return of the flag, called the 장군기/수자기, taken from Korea by the United States in 1871; it was returned in 2007 and I received a commendation from Korea's Cultural Heritage Administration. Since 1993, I have introduced Korean traditional archery to people all over the world. Also, I have taught Korean history and culture in Korean universities since 2006, to both Koreans and international students. Korea is our home and we love it very much. I know many, many international/Korean couples here in Korea who love it here just as much as we do, and also consider it their home. It is very unfortunate that a TV program has painted all of us with such a wide, distorted brush.



Christopher Haylett and Hong Myung Soo
Married three years



Bridget McGregor and Young Sang Lee
Married two years



Doug and Hyongmi Price
Married 36 years
From USA



Brian and Mi Sung Perich
Married eight years
Live in Gangneung



Daniel and Bonnie Lee-Kilduff
Married one month
From Ontario



Melvin Palmiano and Han Yu-Jung
Married 10 years
From Canada



Delia Kang and Sinyoung
From Canada

David and Alice Choi Teskey, son John David
From New Brunswick



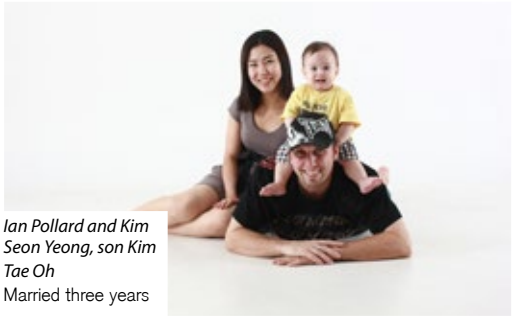


Daniel Payne and his partner, Jun

The love my wife and I share, like the love shared by so many international couples, is far stronger than the hate spread by those who refuse to understand it.
Love transcends all boundaries, be they national, cultural, or social. This is the message that we need to be spreading.

Every once in a while, the ugly side of Korea's long obsession with pure-bloodedness comes to the fore, as it recently did in an "expose" on foreigners and their assumed brutish lustiness towards Korean objects of sexual pleasure. Rather than angering me, it saddens me that minds can be so closed, so small, and so ideologically skewed towards beliefs that breed fear and hatred rather than mutual understanding.

THE TRUTH ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS WITH FOREIGNERS



Ian Pollard and Kim Seon Yeong, son Kim Tae Oh
Married three years



Joe McPherson and Eun Jeong Lee, daughter Jian
From United States

Watching that video, I was both shocked and appalled at the lack of journalistic integrity it had. As a faithful husband to my Korean wife and a father to my son, I was extremely offended by the statements made in the video. I'm a firm believer that organizations such as this station should be held accountable for their actions, and no matter how they try to spin it, they broadcasted it so they are the ones responsible. It amazes me that there are no regulations in place that would prevent a video like this from being broadcast on a national news network in the first place! It's time for a change! I think it's very important that the foreign community stand together and fight this problem in a smart, organized fashion. This is a great first step!



Stephen Craig, Siyeon and Dryden
Married seven years
From Canada

Joshua Beagle and Jungkyung Lee
From United States



I don't think I really need to add to what hundreds have already said about the trashy TV program that was aired. However, I will say that it certainly doesn't reflect the opinions of my Korean friends and colleagues, or my in-laws.



John Morgan and Yunhee, son Joshua
Married 12 years

What a shameful and thoroughly disgusting report. Mixed couples are not something that should be placed under a microscope and whether Korea likes it or not they are here to stay. The only victims are the ones who viewed and believed this report.



Josh and Lina Shaman
Married since March



Kristin Marsh and InSoo Song
Married two years
From USA

We were so saddened by the network news report. Our inter-cultural family is full of challenges, but also love and happiness. But things like this video, and some of the responses to it, make us feel that no matter how much we love Korea, it may not be open enough to be our home.



Lauren Bloch and Ahn Young-seek
Married one year



Matthew Lamers and Ko Seung-hee
Daughters Arabella and Isabelle
Married since 2007



Yun Ji Lee and Sergio Flores
From Guatemala

I have lived in Korea for eight years and I think that Korean people deserve to know the truth. I have seen Korean men treat foreign women the same way that this TV network says foreign men treat Korean women. In fact, I know more than one woman who was sexually assaulted in her home or on a date with a Korean man. Why do we never hear about these incidences in the newspapers? What's more, there are many emotionally and mentally stable foreigners who are married to Korean people and are bringing up well-raised children. This particular network's focus on a small group of people only causes innocent people to be discriminated against. Such discrimination breeds resentment and negative opinions of Koreans, Korea and Korean culture.



Michael Ulibarri and Ji Young Lee, daughter Bia Rose
Married three years



The Yanns
Married 16 years
From France



Sarah Harrison and Yonghan Lee, son Logan Lee
Married three years



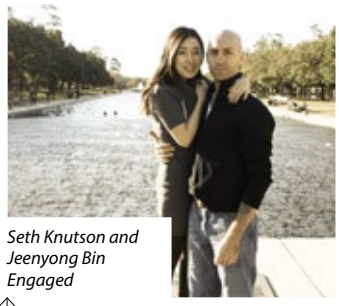
Kevan, Mira, JJ, Ethan Hester
From Texas



Sharon Nagy and her family
Married seven years







Seth Knutson and Jeenyong Bin
Engaged



Jonathan and Sunny Pratt
Married in 2008
From Canada



Natalya and Myongje Cho
Married in 2010
From Spain

Jeenyong and I met while we were both exchange students at Chinese University Hong Kong. She saw me wearing a Korean military shirt, with all my tattoos and shaved head, and asked me out to dinner. That station can release their "victim of a foreigner" garbage, but I don't think people will continue accepting it. The younger generations will disregard the racism and culture/ethnicity/nationality confusion of the past. We'll have been together for a little over three years when we get married in Seoul next spring.



Sarah O'Daniel and Lee Seung-hun
Baby due July 7
From Illinois

Have a question?
Submit your banking questions to farnsworth@shinhan.com

The ins and outs of Korean credit

To get full benefit of your card, be clear at your bank

By Michelle Farnsworth / **Illustration by** Adela Ordoñez



Dear Michelle,
How does a Korean credit card work? *~ Confused on Credit*

Many aspects of the credit card system in Korea are probably a little different than what we may be used to back home — wherever that may be. First of all, when applying for a credit card from your local bank, you probably have hundreds of different options to choose from.

There is a card for everyone, each with unique features and benefits. There's a card for the coffee lover, the department store shopper, the air mile collector and the golfer. Let your teller know what kinds of benefits you want from your credit card. You can earn big discounts and enjoy many benefits if you choose a card that best suits your lifestyle.

Second, you will have to link your credit card directly to your bank account so that each month, on the designated payment date that you choose, your entire credit card balance can be automatically deducted from this account. This may seem strange to those who are used to carrying a revolving balance. In the United States, for example, we only need to pay a small "minimum" every month and can keep a revolving balance on the card that is subject to a relatively high interest rate from the credit card company. We could theoretically go on forever (or at least until we have reached our credit limit), accruing interest owed on our balance and paying just $15 per month.

"Dear Michelle: Banking Advice for Expats" is a monthly column written by Michelle Farnsworth. Michelle is the Foreign Client Relationship Manager in the Shinhan Bank Foreign Customer Department. Please visit "Shinhan Expat Banking" on Facebook for more information. The banking information provided in this column is based on Shinhan Bank policies and may not be applicable to all banks in Korea. — Ed.

There is a card for everyone, each with unique features and benefits. There's a card for the coffee lover, the department store shopper, the air mile collector and the golfer.

So, when managing your cash flow and protecting your credit rating, it is important to note that there may be a gap between when you actually make the purchases with your credit card and the designated payment date that the money is automatically deducted from your account. Let's imagine, for example, that your designated payment date is the 30th of every month. Purchases made from the 15th of the previous month to the 14th of the current month will be automatically deducted from your account on the 30th of every month. Notice the two-week gap. Be sure you understand the payment cycle and have sufficient balance in your account on your designated payment date.

This brings us to the third difference. In Korea, credit cards act more like charge cards — there is no way to just pay a minimum amount each month. The entire balance is automatically deducted from your bank account on the designated payment date.

However, you do have the option of making installment payments. Interestingly, if you buy several items at once, you can choose which items you wish to pay for in installments. If you would like to pay for a specific purchase in three-month or even 24-month installment payments, just ask the retailer at the time of making the purchase. Most retailers will allow it, but some smaller shops will not. If you forget to ask the retailer at the time of purchase, just call your card issuer's call center when you get home and let them know. Don't wait too long to let the card issuer know that you want to pay for that purchase in installments, because once the transaction has been fully processed, the option to pay in installments may be unavailable.

Let your teller know what kind of benefits you want from your credit card. You can earn big discounts and enjoy many benefits if you choose a card that best suits your lifestyle.

Remember, though, that when you choose to pay for credit card purchases with installment payments, some of your credit card benefits will not be applied. For example, if you are earning air mileage, and pay for a purchase in installments, the air miles may not accrue for that purchase. Be sure you understand your card issuer's policies before using the installment payment option.

Lastly, you can also use your credit card to withdraw cash at ATMs and as a post-paid transportation card on buses, in taxis and on the subway, but if you would like these features, be sure to ask your teller to apply them to your card when you apply.

CONTACT MICHELLE
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Live free or die: Getting used to American 'freedom'

Leaving Asian independence behind

By John M. Rodgers / **Illustration by** Adela Ordoñez



It's been a month (well, 33 days to be exact) since I boarded a 10 a.m. Asiana Airlines flight out of Korea and arrived in New Hampshire, northeastern U.S., around 9 p.m. the same day, 13 hours back in time. The world is that small; more than 15 hours in the air, two more in a car and I found myself in the boondocks, the woods and stars the only visible things outside my brother's Cape-style home. There would be a lot to get used to.

The first thing I missed was independence — strange because the state motto of New Hampshire as declared by a famous American Revolutionary War hero, General John Stark, is "Live free or die." Plus, part of the reason I left Seoul was to gain some independence from a job that had drained my soul dry. Now here I was an eight-mile walk from the nearest main road with nothing but two giant duffle bags and a backpack.

Sure, I'd thought about it a million times before I handed back my unsigned contract, cleaned off my desk, emptied my cabinets, packed and mailed my boxes and stuffed those bags heavy to the point that I thought I wasn't going to be able to carry them more than 10 feet. But that was just thinking. This was it.

My older brother had been gracious, offering his home and help or whatever it was I needed. He even made sure there was work for me to do — "I saved some trees for you," he said referring to future firewood still standing in the thick woods behind the home. The 1825 house has two floors, two bedrooms and two baths — distinctions that make a guest more at ease. Nonetheless, my self-sustained life in Asia felt every inch of the 7,000 miles away where I left it. My modern, one-bedroom apartment in the eastern Gwanjin District of Seoul, just a 10-minute walk from work and Mount Acha; my three-minute walk to the local market and two more to a 24-hour convenience store; my 15-minute walk to Gunja subway station for lines 5 and 7 (and on to anywhere); my membership status with phone, cards and markets; my health insurance; my pension — all these amenities and familiarities I left behind.

For the first few days this reality distracted my mind, pulling it away from the beauties of my surroundings, throwing a pall over the fecundity of New England spring. My first real walk quieted those distractions as I stared out over the chestnut, heather, jasmine and lavender hues that filled the rising spring canopies. The rush, bustle and "convenience" of the city drifted away off over the hills and lakes that fill the region.

Things will take longer, I told myself, as I put one foot in front of another on a walk that brought me more than 10 miles over some five hours. Transitions require some level of dependence and moving across the world means leaving things behind, one step at a time.

John M. Rodgers is a founding editor of The Three Wise Monkeys webzine and currently acts as Groove Korea's editor-at-large. John is back in the United States after a long stint in Korea and will be writing about readjustment.

Now, back in the countryside, I see the police on the move more than I ever did in Korea, patrolling, glaring, slowing as they pass and waiting in speed traps.

As a white man in Korea standing over six-feet tall, one thing that I never had to worry about was being accused of something, being leered at by officials, feeling like I, individually, was wrongly blamed. Sure, I got stared at every day on the streets, pointed at by children who called out "me-gook-in," or "way-gook-in" to indicate I was most likely an American or foreigner and, yes, I've been grouped with "foreigners" behaving badly. But people of authority — except officials at Seoul's Omokgyo Immigration Office — treated me as the last person likely to commit or have committed a crime. Police waved me by, subway officials never gave me a second glance (they even helped me carry those heavy bags) and, most importantly, airport security never treated me as a potential threat or miscreant.

America is different. As soon as I got ready to go through security at the "new" terminal 8 in New York's J.F.K. International Airport three hours after I'd deplaned my Seoul flight, I got nervous.

Although I was only headed to Boston, my plane was departing out of the international terminal. A large white woman with short curly hair dressed in a Transportation Security Administration (TSA) barked out orders — "Remove your liquids!"; "Empty your pockets!"; "Take out laptops!"; "Take off your shoes!" — while frightened-looking passengers shuffled through the queue.

A stern-looking black man with a crew cut and broad shoulders ignored my "good afhternoon," took my boarding pass and passport, examined them for much longer than anyone else had during my trip, looked up at me with hard, tightened eyes as if something was bothering him, then sent me on my way. Monitors hanging from the ceiling kept flashing the "3-1-1 program" and I heard the large woman shouting out the term intermittently. Simply put: 1) Liquids, aerosols and gels must be in containers three ounces or less, 2) Items must be put in a one quart, clear plastic zip-top bag, and 3) Only one zip-top bag per passenger.

Shoes, jacket, belt and watch off, pockets emptied (it would be easier to strip) and breath held, I entered the full-body scanner for the first time under the guidance of a short, stout and serious Latina woman. "Raise your hands over your head and turn to the left," she ordered. Ten seconds later the same woman guided me out with a suspicious look on her face. To my left, a middle-aged woman was being "patted down." A male TSA officer wearing rubber gloves with a large, diagonal scar across his forehead approached and asked what was wrong. "There's something on his upper right leg," she told him. And he checked — closely. So this is America, I thought.

Now, back in the countryside, I see the police on the move more than I ever did in Korea, patrolling, glaring, slowing as they pass and waiting in speed traps. I swear one weekend I saw more police cars than I would during a year in Korea. And, from what I can tell, going through New York, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Texas, the police are big, tall men with an attitude and a gun. There is something unfriendly and intimidating about them that doesn't give you that comforting, they're-here-to-help-me feeling. Sure, in Korea, you're not completely confident the police could help if called upon but, as an expat, you also aren't intimidated by them. Back "home," I miss the nonchalance of Korean law enforcement and I wonder if it's a little — or a lot — over the top here.

But it's only been a month and as my brother usually says, "You can get used to anything" — I think he's paraphrasing Charles Schultz who said, "I think I've discovered the secret of life: You just hang around until you get used to it." Still, surrendering my Asian independence and stepping into a high-strung, post-9/11 "police" state isn't something I'm quite ready to get used to.





Burger clash

The Groove Korea crew scours HBC, Gyeongnidan and Itaewon for hidden burger gems

Story by Josh Foreman **/ Photos by** Elizabeth Papile

Any night of the week, Jacoby's Burger in Haebangchon will be packed. Jacoby's is famous. People drive expensive sports cars from distant parts to try the tall, messy burgers. So we didn't go there for our nine-restaurant burger-tasting mission. Instead, we tried lesser-known places in Itaewon, Gyeongnidan and Haebangchon. Our goal: to find the gems, and test the reputations of established places. Chris Holland – a Canadian home chef – and Read Urban and Paloma Julian – our regular food columnists – served as judges for the mission. We tried a cheeseburger at each restaurant, along with one of each of the restaurant's specialties. We did discover a few gems, and a few less-than-gems.

Here are the results.



The "already famous" chicken burger at Phillies.

• Haebangchon



Two Hands Burger (Le Vert)

Score
Taste: 12
Price: 9
Package: 8
Atmosphere: 12
Total: 41
Verdict: The fried egg on the Le Vert burger makes it something special.

When we visited it was still called Le Vert; it's Two Hands Burger now, but the ownership and menu remain the same. With mood lighting, abstract oil paintings on the wall, and jazz music playing softly in the background, it's the kind of place you might go to contemplate something. Not the most traditional atmosphere for a burger joint, but hey, it's relaxing. The entire front wall of the place retracts in nice weather, and this afternoon it was open to the world. Two Hands Burger's menu has 10 burgers, including the "Dubble Burger" and a chili burger. What got our attention, though, was the "Le Vert Burger," which the menu describes as "of senseless magnitude." The thing is like a normal burger, but has bacon and a fried egg on top. The Le Vert burger turned out to be a hit, getting a score of five out of five on taste from Holland and four out of five from Urban. The egg on top was cooked well; the yolk oozed out when we cut into it. Julian, traditionally a tough critic, was harder to please. She said the butter on the bun was overkill with the general fattiness of the burger. The atmosphere, too, was a little dull. "The burger is a little overdone and lonely in the middle of the plate – as lonely as us, the only ones in here for an hour and a half."



Phillies

Score
Taste: 10
Price: 10
Package: 8
Atmosphere: 11
Total: 39
Verdict: Go for a chicken burger, stay for a party.

Well known to HBC residents, Phillies has a couple burgers on its menu. More importantly, it has the burger-eating atmosphere – high tables, big-screen TVs, boisterous patrons and plenty of beer on tap. When we visited, their front wall was also open to the street. One of the regulars was out there drinking and shouting at a woman walking by: "Where you been? You don't call, you don't write, you don't send smoke symbols – damn."

We tried the cheeseburger and the locally famous (or "already famous," as the menu describes it) chicken burger. It came with spicy mayonnaise, red onions and dill pickles. The French fries we ordered were hand-cut and cooked to a deep brown.

The burgers were a hit with Julian and Holland, who gave them four out of five. "Fantastic sauce, great seasoning," Holland wrote. Urban took points for overcooked chicken and soggy fries, but gave high marks for atmosphere. "Burger + beer = good." Holland, too, was a fan of the atmosphere. "It's not just a burger, it's an evening," he wrote.

• Gyeongnidan



Maloney's

Score
Taste: 13.5
Price: 12
Package: 12
Atmosphere: 11
Total: 48.5
Verdict: Maloney's is all-around good.

One of the truly unknown spots of the taste test, Maloney's turned out to be a major gem. The second-floor joint, located on the right up the Gyeongnidan main street, had a rowdy vibe when we visited. Rock played on the stereo, and tattooed men and women yelled around the foosball table. Julian wasn't initially a fan. "It takes forever to be served," she wrote. "I entertain myself trying to figure out how much money in tattoos and hydrogen peroxide the customers have spent in their lives."

When the burgers arrived, though, everyone was a fan. We tried a gorgonzola burger and the regular cheeseburger. The gorgonzola burger came topped with caramelized onions and a lot of that funky, melted cheese. "Finally the gorgonzola burger comes and it's like getting heaven," Julian wrote. "Juicy meat with awesome cheese – it makes me wonder if I'm a good judge, knowing I'm going to die every time a European cheese comes into the competition." Urban said the burgers had "classic burger flavor – good mouthfeel." Maloney's was one of the few places that included fries with the burger. We stayed for a while and even ordered a few dozen wings. It was hard to leave, Holland wrote.



Thunder Burger

Score
Taste: 6
Price: 4.5
Package: 5
Atmosphere: 5
Total: 20.5
Verdict: With so many other better places around, there's just no reason to visit Thunder Burger.

Seoul residents who've been here for a few years will remember Thunder Burger from way back when. The stylized, fast-food-type burger joint operated on Noksapyeong-daero for years before shuttering more than a year ago. They're back, dishing out burgers from their bright yellow, red and white restaurant. Our hopes were high after reading the messages painted on the walls: "Trust us. You may become addicted to our Thunder Burger." After trying them, however, I don't think there's any danger of that. Thunder Burger tries for a classic fast-food style, from their small, paper-wrapped hamburgers to their colorful look.

The burgers, though, fail at achieving even that certain fast-food delectability. Our patty was meager; the entire burger was small. "It cannot compete with the other places," Julian wrote. Comments were sparse; the numbers spoke for themselves: Julian was most generous, with a three out of five for taste.

That's the only category in which the restaurant scored above two. "It is an overpriced fast food joint," Holland wrote. "Wouldn't suggest it to anyone," Urban wrote.



M Burger

Score
Taste: 10
Price: 11
Package: 10.5
Atmosphere: 10.5
Total: 42
Verdict: Unique menu items like the Juicy Lucy and sweet potato fries help M Burger stand out.

Straddling Gyeongnidan and Itaewon, M Burger is more a restaurant than a bar, and has a feel all its own. It's interestingly lit and decorated with bits of Americana. It reminded Julian of a theme park. Most of the seating in the small dining room is at high tables, and there's a terrace with seating out front.

M Burger had one menu item we didn't see anywhere else: the Juicy Lucy. The inside of the Juicy Lucy is filled with cheese, which gushes out when you bite into it. Elizabeth Papile, the photographer for our mission, described it this way: "It's like a volcano – like cheese lava." Our Juicy Lucy did indeed gush, but it was covered with caramelized onions that were a little too caramelized.

Not for Julian, apparently, who loved the place and gave it nearly perfect scores in every category. Urban and Holland gave it mediocre scores. Urban called the Juicy Lucy satisfying and the regular cheeseburger ordinary.

Holland said the meat was dry and lacked flavor, but complimented the sweet potato fries, another unique menu item.

• Itaewon



Prost

Score
Taste: 7
Price: 7
Package: 9
Atmosphere: 15
Total: 38
Verdict: Prost is a cool spot where you can see and be seen, but they need to work on their burgers.

Prost tries for baroque and cabana at once, and somehow it works. You might think the shiny black ceiling, marble tabletops and intricately tiled floor of the place would clash with it being open-air on two sides, but those two aspects actually work together. The breeziness and chic décor of the place, located in the alley behind Hamilton Hotel, make it relaxed and fashionable; customers walk through wearing sunglasses for no damn reason. It is a place in which to see and be seen.

It was packed when we arrived at 6 p.m. on a Tuesday. The staff was curt; when we asked for a table for six, our server simply said they didn't have one. We ended up standing near the bar. We ordered a bleu cheese burger and a cheeseburger. When they arrived at our table, the judges noticed they were suspiciously round. We tasted them, and it became apparent Prost is more about style than substance. "A failed attempt at dressing up a hamburger," Urban said. Holland wrote that the burger tasted freezer-burned and soggy. "They should take more pride in the quality of beef," Urban wrote.

The place did score a perfect five out of five from all judges in the "atmosphere" category, though.



Smokey Saloon

Score
Taste: 6
Price: 7
Package: 7
Atmosphere: 8
Total: 28
Verdict: Smokey Saloon is famous for its burgers; unfortunately, they aren't that good.

Smokey Saloon is one of the oldest and most storied burger joints in Seoul. More than 50 press clippings hang on the walls of the tiny joint, located in the same alley as Prost. So much for finding hidden gems. Curiously, though, Smokey Saloon remains somewhat unknown among expats. Holland had heard of the place for years, but had never eaten there or even talked to anyone who had. The lines were long here, and the inside so packed that we had to order takeout and eat on some stairs nearby. We ordered a cheeseburger and a teriyaki burger. They came out quickly, and we dug in.

Sadly, the legend turned out to be bigger than reality. "We cannot believe what we see," Julian wrote. "It is just like a McDonald's burger, but bigger." "Not attractive," Urban wrote. "A case of the 'popular Korean restaurant.'" The burgers were very McDonald's-ish. The cheeseburger consisted of meat between two white buns, dressed with ketchup, mustard and diced onions, with a slice of processed cheese on top. The teriyaki burger was almost identical, but had sauce. The price of the burgers added insult to injury. Sadly, myth busted.



Two Broz

Score
Taste: 9
Price: 11
Package: 10
Atmosphere: 7
Total: 37
Verdict: Two Broz may be a little dingy, but they succeed in capturing the greasy spoon vibe.

Two Broz turned out to be what Thunder Burger is going for: a diner-style burger joint with a fun vibe and some tasty burgers. Two Broz has the checkered floor, strange lighting and sparse decorations of a greasy spoon in Gary, Indiana. When we showed up, two Korean men were working furiously in the kitchen. We had to get their attention to have our orders taken. What the place lacked in service, they made up for in food. Our burgers came out tall and well dressed, with fries and… beer? Yes, Two Broz serves draft beer with their burger sets, which made Urban happy. "The best out of the Itaewon group," he wrote. The fries were obviously frozen, but the judges didn't mind. "Frozen fries?" Urban wrote. "I don't care – they were good."

Julian wasn't crazy about the place, but found something nice to say: "For the first time tonight I find something genuine in the burger: the mushrooms are good!" Holland took points for a lack of quality ingredients. "Processed cheese on a $10 burger? Getthefuck-outtahere!"



Dillinger's

Score
Taste: 11
Price: 11
Package: 11
Atmosphere: 12
Total: 45
Verdict: Dillinger's has a good atmosphere, a terrace with a great view and a tasty, inexpensive burger.

A favorite among the expat bar-going crowd, Dillinger's is also known for its tasty burgers. We arrived Tuesday night, which happens to be the night of their half-priced burger special.

Their small wood terrace overlooks central Itaewon, and we found a spot there. We ordered a bacon cheeseburger and a regular cheeseburger and drank beer outside while we waited. The breeze was cool, and we reflected on our city.

Dillinger's is beloved by many expats in Seoul, and it showed while we waited. The terrace and inside were packed, and people milled around while "Sweet Emotion" played in the background. The vibe was festive, if a little cramped.

The bacon cheeseburger came slightly charred with crisp bacon and fries on the side. Holland was impressed. "Juicy, spicy," he wrote. "Perfect fries." Julian liked the burger, too, but didn't appreciate the cramped surroundings. "I think they need to invest a little more in furniture," she wrote. Urban thought the burger was underdone, but gave the place a five out of five on atmosphere.

Final verdict:
Maloney's won the competition with its rollicking atmosphere and supremely tasty burgers (the gorgonzola really tipped the scales). Dillinger's was close behind with its juicy, spicy and inexpensive cheeseburger and positive vibe. M Burger and Two Hands Burger both impressed with unique burgers, and Phillies and Prost won out on atmosphere. Two Broz makes some tasty burgers despite a lackluster atmosphere.
Smokey Saloon and Thunder Burger have some work to do.

Final Scores
1. Maloney's – 48.5
2. Dillinger's – 45
3. M Burger – 42
4. Two Hands Burger – 41
5. Phillies – 39
6. Prost – 38
7. Two Broz – 37
8. Smokey Saloon – 28
9. Thunder Burger – 20.5

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Balancing beer at 7brau

By Ryan Noel

Beer, like all good things crafted by humankind, begins with people. Yes, you need good ingredients, but to make the selection of what and how to use those ingredients, you need good people. Hopefully you have people looking for something in particular, something special. They should be working at something that inspires them. They should seek out others with like passions and build something together. In this case, the five founders of 7brau are doing just that here in Korea.

Having earned the first production license since one was given to OB some 77 years ago, 7brau's popularity is spreading. How the 7brau IPA became 7brau's flagship and how its sister brews came into creation is a story about balance and determination. It has to do with everyday hard work and holding on to ideals. 7brau's beer comes in three varieties: a pilsner, an India pale ale (or IPA) and a stout. In general, Korean beer has been lager, lager, lager. 7brau wanted to be different, and thanks to the insistence of directors Kim Kyo-ju and Sean Carter, the IPA found its place.

For an IPA, it is not overly hopped, gently sweet, sufficiently strong and easy to drink. IPA fans may complain it isn't hoppy enough, but then Korea is still learning to appreciate this. The flavor profile is designed to allow Korean beer drinkers to enjoy their first IPA experience while still satisfying foreign palates.

7brau is a completely independent operation, which is why it doesn't taste like something made in a factory. Sample some and you can tell it is nothing like OB, Cass or Hite. That difference in taste does not come from research and development. It comes from purity, beginning with water from an insanely deep (over 800 meters) well in the mountains of Gangwon Province, where the brewery is located. All-natural barley, hops, malt and other ingredients follow. No extracts or additives are part of the mix. The pilsner is most similar to the familiar Korean lager, but smoother, full-bodied and with a hint of sweetness. Most importantly, it has none of the flaccid, bitter, flat or weak tones about which most Korean beer-drinkers complain. Again, this was designed with Koreans and foreigners in mind.

7Brau is a completely independent operation, which is why it doesn't taste like something made in a factory.

Lastly, we have the stout. Nicely dark, made with roasted barley and dark malt, this unfiltered beauty is still light when compared to most other stouts. But once more, 7brau Stout was not designed to be like other stouts. It does happen to be the easiest to drink of any stout I have ever consumed. Koreans generally do not dig in to dark hearty loaves of bread as a dietary staple, so why should drinking a Korean stout be like eating a loaf of bread? It shouldn't.

It all comes together in a glorious mountain setting. The air is clean and fresh; and the mountainside is a luxurious green. The brewery building itself is an adapted winery that has been refitted. Copper kettles are the first things to greet your eyes as you enter. To the left are two rows of large shining vats holding the liquid goodness. That's pretty much it. There are some modest office spaces upstairs and a place for the brewmaster or his assistant to sleep (they keep a 24-hour watch on things). Although large enough to meet government specifications for licensing, the brewery isn't much bigger than a microbrewery. Compared to some American microbreweries (not so micro anymore) it is quite small.



Kim Kyoju (Director), Yoon Jinsu (Brewmaster/Director),
Sean Murphy Carter (Director),
Kim Kangsam (CEO), Yoon Insu (Director)
Yoon Jinsu (Brewmaster/Director),
Kim Wonbin (assistant brewmaster)

"That difference in taste does not come from research and development. It comes from purity, beginning with water from an insanely deep (over 800 meters) well in the mountains of Gangwon Province, where the brewery is located."

It seems everyone involved with 7brau has beer in his veins. CEO Kim Kang-sam got his start in beer with his first microbrewery bar, Carib, located in Balsan, in 1998. Braumeister and Director Yoon Jin-soo has been brewing since 2003. Having studied under a German master, he further honed his skills at locations like Carib and Trains in Seoul Station before he came to work his magic at 7brau. Director and beer enthusiast Yoon In-soo is the owner of three restaurants near Gangnam Station. Kyo-ju is a member of Mek Man Dong, the Korean home brewing group, when he's not busy being CEO at REAS Energy Consulting in Seocho. Lastly, but best known among expats, is Carter. Carter has lived in Korea for the past 10 years. He accredits his work ethic to his brother and jokes that he "earned his beer degree in consumption." His passion for beer brought him together with the other partners. These five entrepreneurs are the men behind 7brau.

What unfolded, and continues to play out, is an acrobatic performance in which 7brau successfully balances its beer between cultures.

If they keep their balance, where will they head next? To a major supermarket near you, possibly as early as September.

About the author: Ryan Noel is a regulator contributor to the Food & Drink section. To contact the food editor, e-mail joshforeman@groovekorea.com – Ed.

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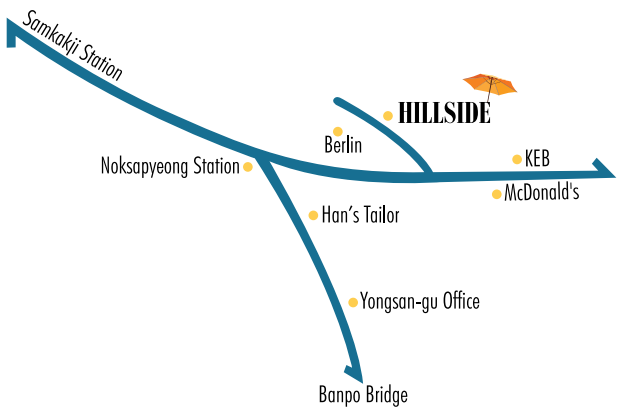




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Bloody goodness, in a glass

By Read Urban / **Photo by** Elizabeth Papile



Groove Recipe

Preparation time: 40m
Difficulty: Easy

Sunday Funday begins and ends with Bloody Marys in my house. They are the excuse we need to explain how we ended up with pants on our heads on Sunday afternoon screaming at strangers in the street. It starts off innocently enough — brunch with friends after a night out on the town. A good, greasy breakfast to settle the stomach and, oh why not, something to take the edge off that hangover. It all starts with that simple order: I'll have a Bloody Mary. I recently mentioned to my mother that I was thinking about writing about Bloody Marys. She responded with a resounding "They are your birthright." I don't really know what that means, but I can tell you I grew up watching the adults in my family make sure we were stocked up on Bloody Mary mix each vacation.

When I was finally of age, I realized a golden rule of cocktail making: You can mask the taste of booze, but you can't cover up a mediocre mix.

"I realized a golden rule of cocktail making: You can mask the taste of booze, but you can't cover up a mediocre mix."

It can be difficult to find tomato juice not overly sweetened in Korea. Even if you happen to find a decent brand, they tend to have a lot of preservatives and even more sodium. Now that we are in the throes of summer and fresh produce overflows the streets, I have taken to making my own tomato juice at home. It is a simple process as long as you have a pot, a blender and a fine mesh strainer. It keeps in the fridge for about a week and I bet it even freezes pretty well (ice cubes for your Bloody Mary, maybe?).

Make your Bloody Mary mild or spicy; it's up to you. You could even track down a bottle of pepper vodka and have a real party. I crank up the heat on mine, but I toned it down a bit for the recipe. Do yourself a favor and make the Bloody Mary mix before you head out on Saturday night. You'll thank me on Sunday, but probably not the following Monday. Cheers.

Homemade
Bloody Mary

- 2 ¼ cups of tomato juice
- The juice of one lemon
- 1 tablespoon of soy sauce
- ½ teaspoon of gochu garu (Korean red pepper flake)
- ½ tablespoon of wasabi
- 1 tablespoon of honey
- Salt and pepper to taste (I recommend at least half a tablespoon of coarse ground black pepper)

Whisk all of the ingredients together in a large bowl. Fill a tall glass to the brim with ice. Pour two shots of vodka over the ice, fill the rest of the glass with the bloody mary mix and stir. Serve with a lemon wedge or celery stick.

Homemade
Tomato Juice

- 5 cups of cored, roughly chopped ripe tomatoes
- 1 stalk of celery, leaves included roughly chopped
- 1 clove of garlic
- ½ an onion, peeled and roughly chopped
- 1 cup of water
- A pinch of salt

Put the ingredients in a sauce pan and place over medium-low heat. Cook for 15-20 minutes, or until the vegetables have worn off excess liquid and the mixture is just cooked through. Transfer to a blender and puree in batches. Push the tomato puree through a fine wire mesh seive or strainer. Discard the pulp, seeds and tomato skin and chill. Add water to adjust the thickness.

About the author: Read Urban, a Virginia native, spent years cooking in the United States before coming to Korea. He enjoys experimenting with Korean ingredients, eating at innovative restaurants in Seoul and creating favorites from home.

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EXPLORING AN UNDER-TRAVELED

THAI ISLAND

Story & Photos by Colin Roohan



KO CHANG – Thailand

It's 10 o'clock in the morning. The breeze is calm, the tide is gentle and the elderly Englishmen nearby have just ordered their first round. Island life is good. The allure of Thai islands is no secret, and throughout history travelers have been coming to the Land of Smiles for much needed rest and relaxation. Ko Chang, or Elephant Island, situated in the northeast corner of the Gulf of Thailand, is the second-largest Thai island. Despite being in the land of tourism, the island has retained remarkable charm.

I selected Ko Chang over more popular islands such as Ko Samui or Phuket because of descriptions I had read online and in guidebooks. Most describe Ko Chang as slower-paced and ideal for vacationing families, a con in some travelers' reviews. However, the majority of reviews loved Ko Chang's atmosphere and the fact that it is not known as a party island.

As my overly stuffed tuk-tuk pulled up to my resort I thought about the scene in "Apocalypse Now" when the men arrive at Colonel Kurtz's compound by boat. (You know, the scene with impaled heads, intimidating villagers and the maniacal photographer?) Well, Kurtz's lush Shangri-La of a compound was just what this resort resembled, and the sounds of tropical birds and lapping waves only added to the sense of seclusion. The rudimentary check-in was followed by a walk along the beach with a Singha in hand, never a bad way to cap off a full day of traveling. The sense of enjoyment was almost tactile.

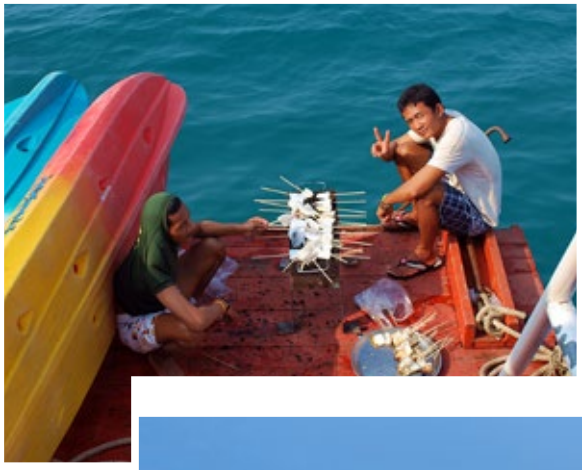
After several days of slowly winding my way through the surrounding landscape, I was ready to take part in some of the numerous activities Ko Chang had to offer: island hikes that lead to waterfalls, sustainable elephant trekking, scuba diving and snorkeling and boat trips through Ko Chang's surrounding islands. I mostly enjoyed my time on a daylong boat trip through the surrounding islands. The staff, mostly made up of 20-somethings, kept me and a couple other passengers in stitches with their antics. These guys weren't simply treating us like dollar signs; they seemed to genuinely enjoy showing us the views surrounding Ko Chang.



Ko Chang Yutthanavi Day, which occurs in late January at the Ko Chang Yutthanavi Memorial on Laem Ngop, commemorates the Royal Thai Navy's engagement against the French at the Battle of Koh Chang on Jan. 17, 1941. There is an exhibition by the Royal Thai Navy, and merit-making and tribute rites are performed.

The highlight of my day was enjoying the laughs with a couple crew members on the back of the boat while they showed me how to grill squid on a hibachi. The chili oil served with the squid still makes me salivate.







I was ready to take part in some of the numerous activities Ko Chang had to offer: island hikes that lead to waterfalls, sustainable elephant trekking, scuba diving and snorkeling and boat trips through Ko Chang's surrounding islands.

The crew attempted to teach me how to catch fish with my hands (which I couldn't do) and how to properly maneuver a sea kayak (which I cannot wait to do again). If you do decide to see the surrounding ocean, hiring a local crew and negotiating your fee directly, with the captain bypassing package tours, will help sustain the local economy. If possible ask to visit Ko Wai, one of the most scenic beaches I have ever visited. There isn't a lot to do on the island but a dip in the crystal-clear water and a visit to the island's sea turtle nursery warrant a visit. The highlight of my day was enjoying the laughs with a couple crew members on the back of the boat while they showed me how to grill squid on a hibachi. The chili oil served with the squid still makes me salivate.

Rather than spending much time in the hotel, I walked the beaches and talked to countless people. As a result I saw the value of gaining a local perspective. Any attempt to sum up Ko Chang as a relaxing destination would simply fall short. Ko Chang is a place of character and must be experienced first-hand. Sadly, like most of its relatives, Ko Chang is slowly changing and a few beaches have already begun hosting Full Moon parties. Get to Ko Chang soon before this quaint little beach develops any further and the guesthouses are all owned by foreigners.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Ecotourism – Hiking, kayak rentals and village homestays are all great ways to help the locals who live near Ko Chang's mangrove swamps, in Ao Salak Kok bay. Help keep the resort developers away by supporting the local fishermen and guides.

Volunteering – The Koh Chang Pony Rehabilitation Project saves and rehabilitates mistreated horses and ponies. Stop by for a chance to help feed, clean or exercise these animals that are awaiting adoption.

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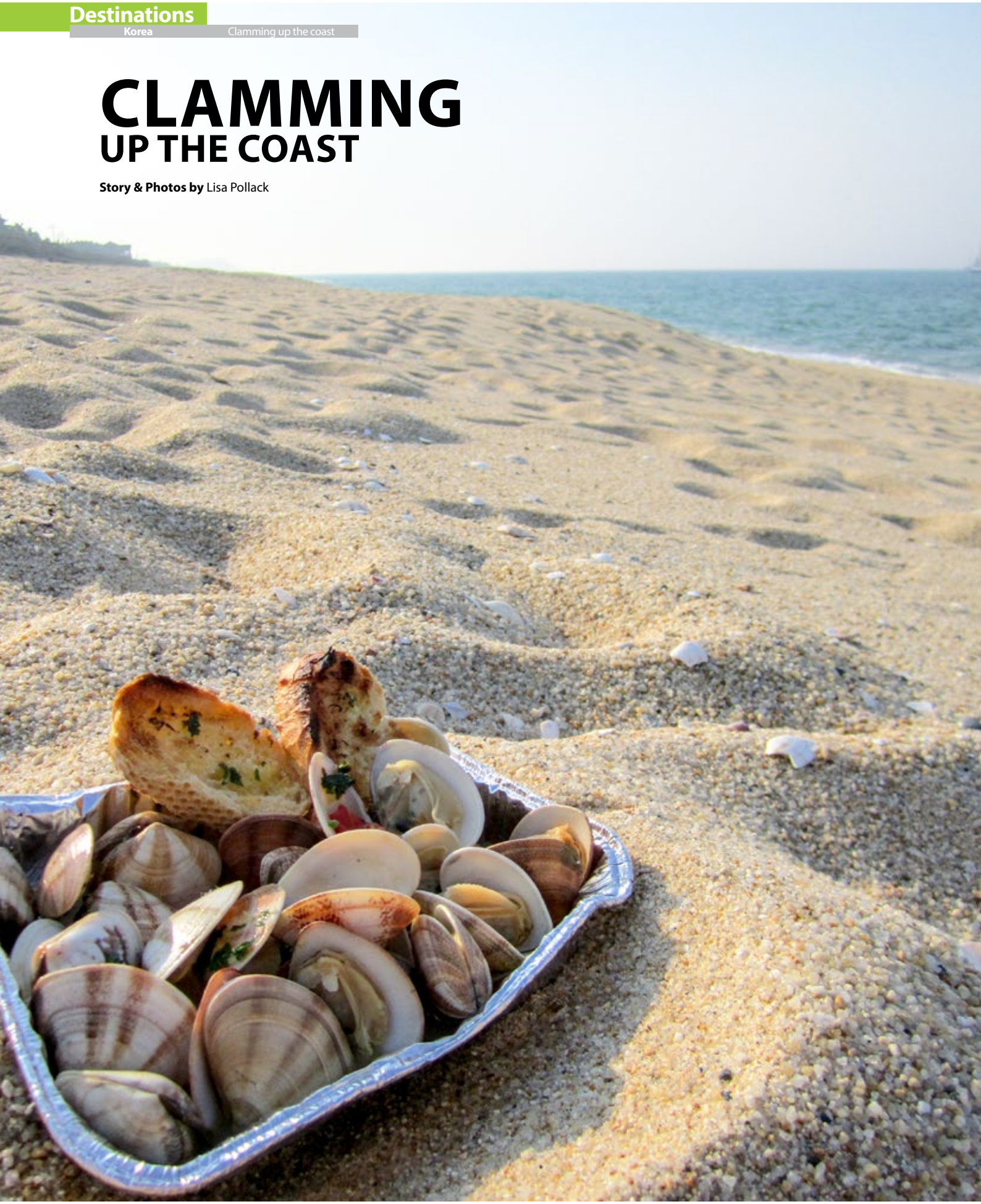
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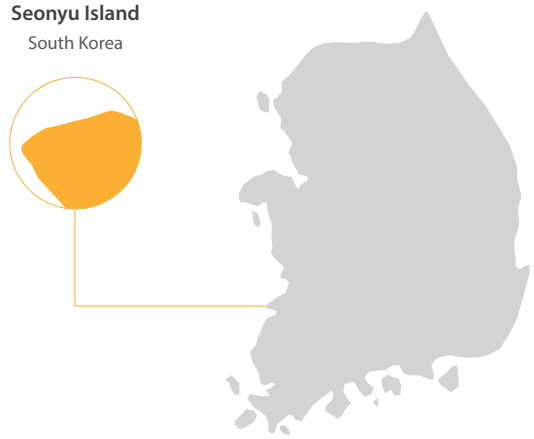
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CLAMMING
UP THE COAST

Story & Photos by Lisa Pollack





SEONYU ISLAND – South Korea

Eat local: The hipster mentality has gone mainstream. In an age when cows are pumped full of hormones and there's a list of "ingredients" on a packet of chicken, it's nice to be in control of one thing that goes into my body. Familiarity with a local source is one way to achieve this. Lessening our environmental impact is another rationale for finding a local supply. It's aided by the guilt of a coal-dependent conscience. Or, in my case, the sunburns attributed to a thinning of the ozone. They aren't doing a thing for my youthful complexion.

Something's got to give. As a step towards reducing our carbon footprint, we can take responsibility for the resources expelled to bring us the dinner du jour. Hunt and gather. You go straight to the source, the only by-product is sweat, and thrill doesn't have a market value. We all have an inner Rambo, and it's time to let it out. You must be open to shellfish, however, because in this case you'll be rewarded with clams, not a lifetime supply of sequels.

> "Without warning, the slimy little sucker would poke its head out. Strike with swiftness, and you'd behold a pulsating friend. One step closer to a clam bake!"

On the trail of salty satisfaction, first let's look down south. Off the coast of North Jeolla Province, there's a cluster of islands that lie in the Yellow Sea. About 20 kilometers off the coast, the most prominent is Seonyu Island. It's accessed by ferry from Gunsan. I was lured there last June with friends under the pretense of a sea-parting. When we arrived, Moses had left the building and we learned "parting" was a broad term for watching the tides recede.

Regardless, we were able to dig for clams. With the sun just moving behind an opposing island, the scene was picturesque. As the sea shrank away, young and old gathered in its glistening shadow. Under a setting sun, many moons rose up from the shore.

All were hunched over, intently searching, hindquarters saluting the sky. Anxious for the assault, we were quickly briefed in the art of excavation. On the agenda: a swift operation to take down razor clams. Necessities: shovel, salt and cat-like reflexes. What I could have done without: intense fear of worm-like creatures.

The method was to first seek out the air holes. When a suspect was identified, we used the shovel to dig down a couple of inches, keeping an eye on the hole. Then it was time to bait. A liberal sprinkling of salt was enough to lure out the prey. The quick-wristed stood at attention, ready for a hasty snatch. Without warning, the slimy little sucker would poke its head out. Strike with swiftness, and you'd behold a pulsating friend. One step closer to a clam bake!

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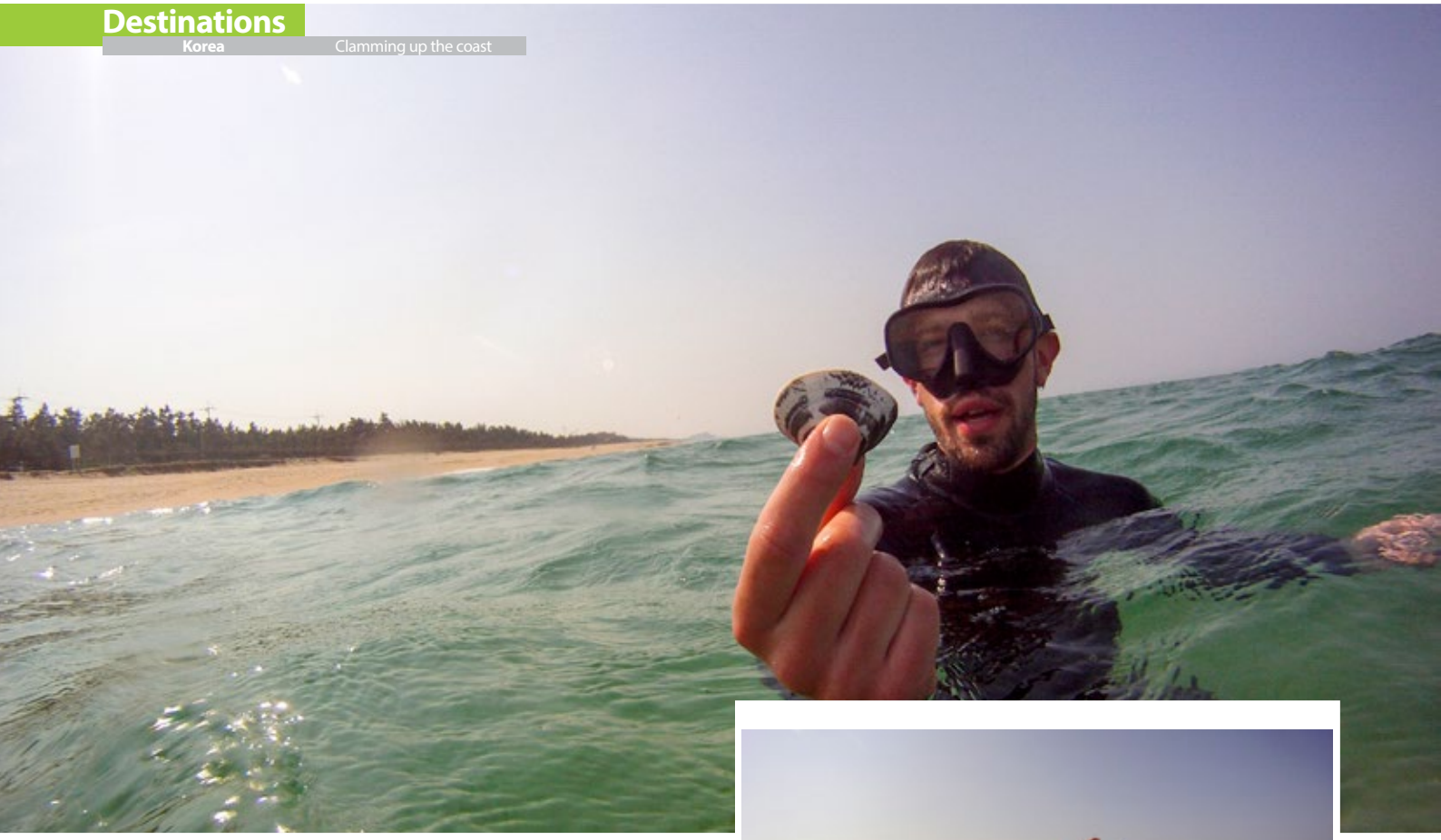
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When we arrived, Moses had left the building and we learned "parting" was a broad term for watching the tides recede. Regardless, we were able to dig for clams.

That night, we cooked our catch up seaside on a roaring bonfire. Soft and briny, the clams paired splendidly with s'mores. Perfect end to a perfect island day.

This year, I'm looking closer to home to satisfy my salt-tooth. I'd heard rumors of clam-diving along the northeastern coast and I wanted to check it out. A friend, Augustine Contrera, is quickly emerging as Monsieur Connoisseur on the local clamming circuit.

I commissioned him with sweet-and-sour pork, and he let me follow along on an expedition. A loyal fan of Mythbusters, it's no surprise he's broken it down to a science. A stand-up paddleboard to reach the dive site, weights to anchor the board, paddle, goggles and something to secure the catch. The list may seem intimidating, but there's a minimalist approach as well. The most important item is the receptacle.

Since the magic happens out at sea, it's necessary to have some way to hold on to your clams. Augustine, finding his inner engineer, saw opportunity in an empty onion sack. Some right-brained friends saw it in their swim tops. Being resourceful, they filled their busts up 'til they were bursting at the seams. Stuffing your bra with socks is so last season. Hands free, the clams were tightly secured until once again ashore. Off Anmok beach in Gangneung, Augustine paddled out to sea. About 5 meters off the shore, he set the anchor.

Time and time again, he'd dive down to the ocean floor, ruffle up the settled sand, and find just what he was looking for. Clams tend to grow in patches, so if you're on to one, it's likely you've found a whole feast.

The clams around Gangneung differ from Seonyudo's and are closer in resemblance to a short neck. Delicate and tasty, they're as fresh as it gets and perfect steamed right in the shell. We settled in and cooked them up on the beach. I'd planned ahead and sautéed up a little flavor base. Samgyeopsal, onions and tomatoes melded together on the grill with wine, butter and the essence of the sea. With our conscience cleared and our bellies full, taking on the next global initiative would have to wait 'til morning.



Recipe for
BEACH CLAMS

Ingredients

57 grams butter (1/2 stick standard size or 1/8 stick Korean size), softened to room temperature
2 cloves garlic, pressed or finely minced
1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley
1/2 teaspoon grated lemon rind

100 grams samgyeopsal (sliced pork belly), diced
1/2 medium onion, diced
200 grams cherry tomatoes, quartered
½ kilogram short neck clams (or any available variety), scrubbed and soaked in fresh water for at least 1 hour
6 ounces dry white wine

1 baguette, sliced
1 lemon, halved
Blood, sweat and tears

Directions

1. In a bowl, combine butter with garlic, parsley and lemon rind. Set aside.
2. Heat a medium-sized skillet over medium-high heat. When hot, add samgyeopsal. Cook four to five minutes, stirring frequently, or just until beginning to brown. Add onion. Sauté another three to five minutes. When onion is softened and turning golden, toss in tomatoes. Sauté just a minute, then remove from heat.
3. Transfer mixture to the bottom of a grill-safe pan. Pile in the clams. Top off with white wine and 3/4 of the butter mixture. Cover securely, and place on grill over hot coals. (Could also be done on the stove top)
4. Steam until all clams are opened, about 10 to 15 minutes depending on the heat.
5. While clams steam, spread reserved butter mixture on baguette slices. Toast on grill, about 1 minute per side.
6. Remove clams from heat. Finish with a squeeze of lemon juice and serve with grilled baguette.

Author

For more from the author, visit http://thaicurryinkorea.wordpress.com.

Seonyudo

http://english.visitkorea.or.kr/enu/index.kto

Gangneung

http://english.visitkorea.or.kr/enu/index.kto



The scoop on
Korean water parks

Story by Sunny Pratt

The best way to deal with the heat is to get wet. Here are some great water parks — and how to get discounts for them.



More information:

For updates and information, see Sunnysmartshopping at www.facebook.com/sunnysmartshopping.

1) Sea-la-la: You can get here easily by subway. This water park has water slides, a spa and a "jjimjilbang," or public bath.
Location: Line 2, Mullae Station, exit 4
Prices: Weekdays - 22,000 won / Weekends - 27,000 won (For children: Weekdays - 17,000 won / Weekends - 22,000 won. Also, under 36 months is free, but you need to bring a document to prove how old your child is.)
Hours: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Discounts: Lotte Card - 20% off
Okcashbag: 30% off (if you have points)
If you live in Yeongdeungpo-gu - 30% off (You need to prove that you live in Yeoungdeungpo)
Homepage: www.sealala.com (in Korean)

2) Four Season: This park is also accessible by subway. It's not just a water park, but also a sports complex, complete with a jjimjilbang, sauna, sky pool and golf center.
Location: Line 2 and 5, Wangsimni Station, exit 5
Price: Weekdays - 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. - 22,000 won (adult), 17,000 won (child). From 4 p.m., 30% off. Weekends – 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. - 28,000 won (adult), 22,000 won (child). From 4 p.m., 30% off.
Under 24 months is free (You need to bring proof of how old your child is.)
Hours: 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. (They don't open the pool on weekdays from September to May)
Discounts: KB Card (including check card) - four people, 20% off
Samsung Card four people - 10% off
KEB Card, four people - 10% off
Homepage: www.fseason.co.kr (in Korean)

3) Geumgangsan Land: This place is huge. They have lots of attractions like water slides, an aqua playground and indoor and outdoor swimming pools. This one is only reachable by car; no public transportation.
Location: Paju, in Gyeonggi Province
Price: From July 15 to August 15 - 39,000 won (adult), 30,000 won (child)
After August 15 - 29,000 won (adult), 22,000 won (child)
Under 36 months is free (Once again, proof of the child's age is needed)
Hours: 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Discounts: Shinhan Card – 2 people, 20% off
Hyundae M Point Card – 1 person 40% off
Homepage: www.kksland.co.kr (in Korean)

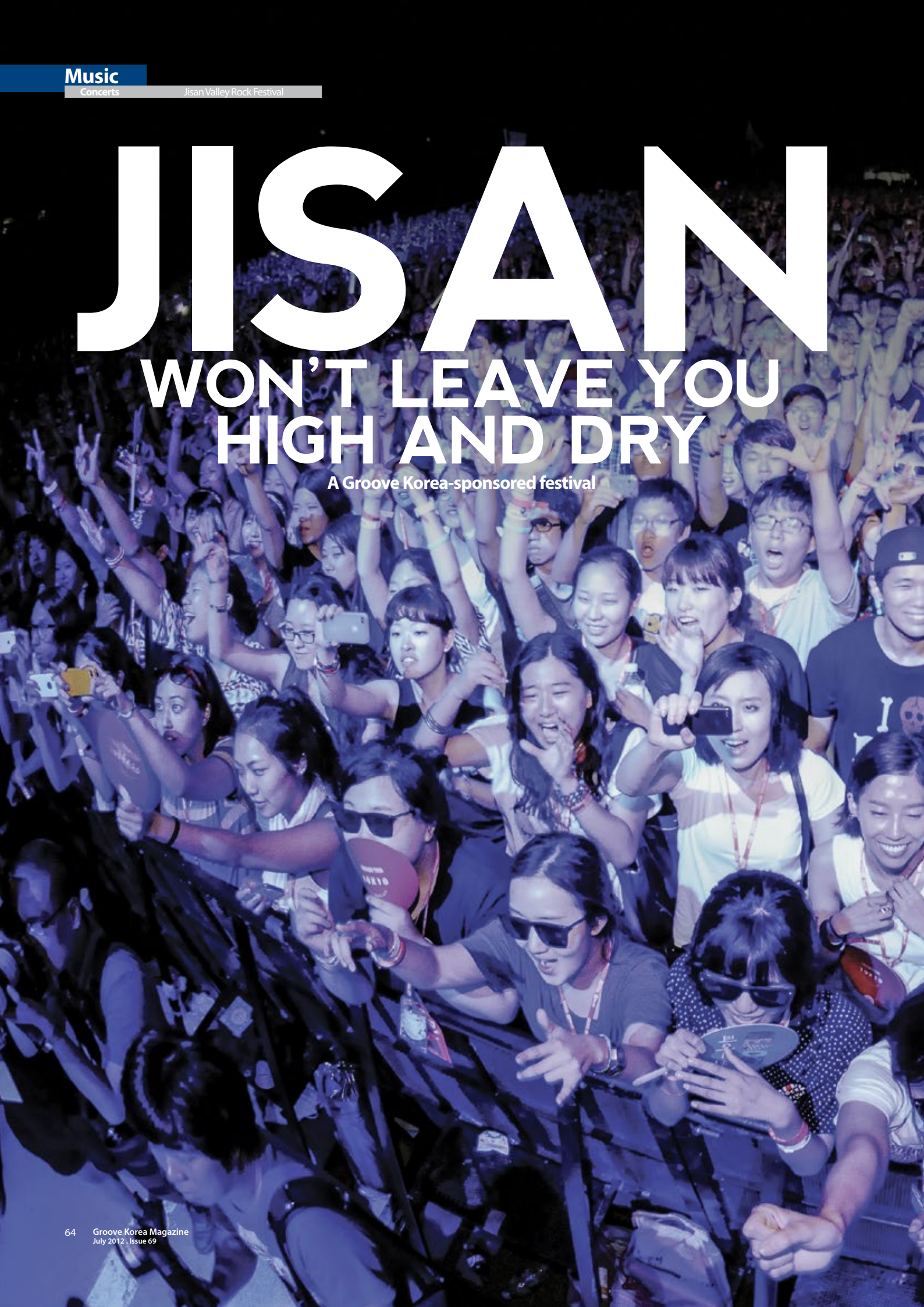
4) Woongjin Play City: As the name suggests, this place is basically a city. There you'll find neighborhoods with names such as Water City, Snow City, Golf City and Kids' City. You can go there by subway and bus.
Location: Line 1, Bugae Station, exit 2. Take the 579 or 79 bus. Get off at Bupyeong Information Industry High School. It's also accessible from Songnae Station, exit 2. Take the 96 bus. Get off Bupyeong Information Industry High School
Price: 40,000 won (adult), 30,000 won (child)
After 4 p.m. - 25,000 won (adult), 20,000 won (child)
Under 36 months is free (Proof needed)
Hours: 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.
Discounts: Shinhan, KB, Samsung, KEB, and Lotte cards (not BC cards – sorry) Weekdays 25% off / Weekends 20% (up to 4 people)
SKT Card - 40% for 1 person (Only if you have enough points)
Homepage: www.playdoci.com (in Korean and in English)

5) Caribbean Bay: This is a part of Everland. This place is also huge and very popular. Around this place, there are many kinds of accommodation. You can enjoy what Koreans call "one bak, two il" (a 2 day, 1 night trip).
Location: Yongin, Gyeonggi Province. You can go there by bus
Price: 50,000 won (adult), 39,000 won (child). After 2:30 p.m., 42,000 won (adult), 33,000 won (child)
Under 36 months is free. (Proof needed)
Hours: It depends on the date, but usually 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Discounts: Samsung, BC, KEB, KB, HanaSk, NH, Citibank and Hyundae Cards – 30 to 50% off
Homepage: www.everland.com (in Korean, English, Japanese, Chinese)



JISAN WON'T LEAVE YOU HIGH AND DRY

A Groove Korea-sponsored festival





2012 JISAN VALLEY ROCK FESTIVAL

Story by Ethan Thomas

The Jisan Valley Rock Festival in Icheon is all grown up. What started in 2009 as a fledgling music festival trying to take on surly, older brother Pentaport has now gotten a lot bigger than its sibling in Incheon. With Radiohead on the bill, it certainly deserves its adult status.

The first year's big names were Weezer, Fall Out Boy and Jimmy Eat World. Nothing special, but a good start. 2010 saw Pet Shop Boys, Vampire Weekend and Massive Attack. Again, solid, but no real big draw. The lineup in 2011 seemed a little more suited to brother Pentaport, with the rock bands Incubus and Arctic Monkeys, but it was still a step in the right direction.

Now with 2012's lineup of the aforementioned Radiohead, the Stone Roses, Los Lonely Boys, James Blake, Elvis Costello, Liam Gallagher of Oasis' Beady Eye and M. Ward, Jisan has finally, truly arrived. The festival begins on July 27 and runs until July 29, but campers can set up on the 26th in the evening and take down camp on the morning of the 30th. Camping tickets are only available for people who buy three-day passes.

Korea has long scrounged after Japan's summer festivals of Fuji Rock and Summer Sonic, often picking up the scraps from their bigger, more impressive lineups. While Japan is still a bigger draw for top-shelf performers, it's hard to deny the progress promoters here have made.

Festival culture is still relatively new to Korea, not to mention its total lack of follower culture. Fans of Phish, Widespread Panic or the the Grateful Dead would be nomads without a cause here.

Give it time. It's not hard to see Jisan and Pentaport growing into something like Bonnaroo or Coachella in the U.S. or the U.K.'s Redding and Glastonbury in the not-so-distant future.

It might take a decade, but they're on the right track. If they can get the bands, what's not to like? Korean crowds are excellent at shows. The fans are polite and respectful. They're not overly drunk or on drugs, so they dance all night without the help of foreign substances. It seems they come purely for the music, which is the best kind of fans there are.

Plus, it should be easy enough to get to the show. We all know that Korean public transportation is fantastic, and there should be plenty of cabs.

The city of Icheon in Gyeonggi Province otherwise doesn't offer much for visitors. Just shy of 200,000 people, the town has long been known for ceramics, peaches and rice, as well as the ski resort where the festival takes place. But that's what makes it ideal for a no-frills, outdoor festival. Festival organizers realize many Koreans are used to city comforts. They know the lines to the bathrooms are going to be long and the local mosquitoes consider the festival high season, but they also know that's what makes the experience worth it. Stay in Hongdae if you don't like getting grass in your tent.

Come to Jisan for what is turning into one of the best music festivals in East Asia. It's going to be a blast.

Busker Busker
hits the big time

Interview by Ara Cho



Interview
Busker Busker - 버스커 버스커

An indisputable mark of fame in the K-pop scene is when all the shops in Myeong-dong play a band's music on repeat. One such band that recently catapulted to stardom is Busker Busker.

The Korean indie band consists of three members — Jang Beom-jun (guitar and vocal), Kim Hyung-tae (bass) and Brad Moore (drums). While already a household name among Koreans, they are largely unknown among expats, though you've probably already heard their hits "Tokyo Girl," "Yeosu Night Sea" and "Cherry Blossom Ending" spilling onto the streets wherever you live, even if you don't know them by name.

Contrary to what may be suggested by the moniker, their claim to fame is not street performance, but rather Mnet's singing survival show "Super Star K," a Korean rendition of "American Idol."

Even though they finished second in the third season of the hugely popular audition-reality show, the band amassed nationwide popularity evinced by more than 13 million downloads of their debut album, an unheard-of feat for a new artist.

Busker Busker is also scheduled to perform at the 2012 Jisan Valley Rock Festival on July 29.

Catchy, comfortable and easy-listening, their first album is worthy of the frequent playlist designation for your iPod. Busker Busker keeps a low profile — they've yet to launch an official website — which made us more eager to get to know them. Here's what we shook out of the jolly, easy-going buskers:

Even though they finished second in the third season of 'Super Star K,' the band amassed nationwide popularity evinced by more than 13 million downloads of their debut album, an unheard-of-feat for a new artist.

Groove Korea: Were you a frequent busker before you became Busker Busker?
Busker Busker: Yes, we used to busk fairly regularly at a park in Cheonan, where Sangmyung University (where the Korean members were students) is located. Busking in Cheonan was not very common compared to the Hongdae area, but we liked the idea that we could make our town more lively by busking. Since we started as a busking band, it was only natural to name ourselves Busker Busker.

Since you received explosive attention from "Super Star K," it must not have been easy to continue busking. Besides the upcoming 2012 Jisan Valley Rock Festival, what other venues are you scheduled to perform at?
We have just performed at the Rainbow Festival in Nami Island, and finished our first nationwide tour. So until Jisan Valley Rock Festival, we are going to have no more concerts, and spend our time working on our next album and enjoy the long-awaited free time!

Is there a language barrier among band members?
We don't have much difficulty in communication, unlike what most people think. Beom-jun and Hyung-tae can speak English pretty well. Brad's Korean is not that good, but we still can understand each other. Admittedly we can't talk a lot (laughter) but we don't have many problems because when making music, we just play a chord and ask, "like it?"
You would be surprised how much music can get made without talking.

Do you have plans to perform outside of Korea, say, in Japan, Southeast Asia or the U.S.?
We did have a chance to perform in Japan last April — it was a very special experience singing in Korean in front of people who spoke a different language. But since lyrics are still important for us, we will think more about (performing in more places abroad) when we can speak more languages. It will be fun if we go to the United States and have Brad interpret for us (Beom-jun and Hyung-tae).

Do you have plans to diversify your style into a new or different genre?
Hmm … yes and no. We don't think our style is fixed because we are still a new band. But we don't feel we need to change it. It will happen naturally.

How did you all meet and decide to do music together?
Beom-jun and Hyung-tae went to the same university (Sangmyung University), and Brad was Hyung-tae's professor for the English class he took. One day Beom-jun, Hyung-tae and other friends were busking in a park — as was usual. A foreign couple passing by gave us money — they were Brad and Danny (Brad's wife). After that we started to busk together as a hobby. It wasn't until after we came in second at "Super Star K" that we put that much thought into it. We hadn't taken it seriously, but alas, it became our fate.

One day Beom-jun, Hyung-tae and other friends were busking in a park — as was usual. A foreign couple passing by gave us money — they were Brad and Danny (Brad's wife). After that we started to busk together as a hobby.

How has your everyday life changed since "Super Star K3"?
A lot. At the beginning we did not feel very different, but we realized that it became difficult to have small busking sessions like before. Meeting friends during the daytime also became difficult. Life became busier and more complicated.

Where do you get the inspiration for your music?
Experience and memory — about love mostly.

How would you describe your music?
Easy, simple and friendly.

Tell us a little about yourselves.
Beom-jun: I am from Gwangju and started playing the guitar at age 15. I started to play music to express my feelings. One of my favorite musicians is Nell and my source of inspiration is love and women.
Hyung-tae: I'm from Gimhae (South Gyeongsang). I started to play music when I was 20 because it was fun!
Brad: I'm from Ohio but I consider Korea as my second home seeing as my life has changed drastically here. I started playing music around 13, mainly for fun. I like The Killers and Danny is my muse.

Black Skirts:
A one man band and a few helping hands

Interview by Ethan Thomas

Singer-songwriter Holiday Cho started The Black Skirts in 2004, and by 2008 the band's debut album won the 7th Korean Pop Music Award for Best Modern Rock Album. Like some lo-fi bands with punk backgrounds the drumming is loud and simple, the guitars are fuzzy and Cho's vocals are stylized to sound disaffected and brash.

"Melodies matter to us more than anything in a song," Cho said in an email interview with Groove Korea magazine.

Also known as 검정치마, the band has a considerable following and is thought to be one of the key figures in the Korean indie scene, even if Cho doesn't like to think too much about indie music in Korea.

"We don't really have an opinion when it comes to the scene, but it's cool, I guess." Cho said he gets his inspiration from watching TV and that his favorite bands are Rancid, the Misfits and the Beach Boys, which makes sense from a band that focuses on melody with a strong punk influence.

Cho said he's excited to see Elvis Costello at the Jisan Valley Rock Festival, "hopefully with his full band this time."

Being as they're not long in the tooth in interviews, fans shouldn't expect too much posturing from the Black Skirts. It should be a no-nonsense show. "We don't romanticize rock and roll," Cho said. "We just play music."

The Black Skirts will take the stage at Jisan on July 29.

Fans shouldn't expect too much posturing from the Black Skirts. It should be a no-nonsense show.



Lucid Fall, Cho Yoon-seong
Turn jazz on its head

Interview by Ethan Thomas

The vocalist and guitarist for Lucid Fall says the name means "shiny, pure and fresh." With the band Misoni he has released four studio albums since 2001. He plans to rearrange his previous hits with pianist Cho Yoon-seong, whose style is heavily influenced by American jazz and Latin music.

Long-time fans should expect different twists on old favorites.

"We will play some of my songs and some Brazilian standards such as songs by Lulu Santos and Milton Nascimento," Lucid Fall said in an email interview with Groove Korea magazine.

"Thus, we may not 'rock' for some American/British music fans, or may really rock for long-time Lucid Fall fans." It has been a while since Lucid Fall played at a concert of this size. "Since 2008, this is my first time at an open-air festival. We will perform with the same members from my recent album, 'Belos Tempos.'"

As far as influences go, he draws from a wide range. "Right now, many books and articles inspire me. Of course, everything I encounter in my daily life is precious enough to inspire me.

"For example, a singing bird in the morning, the irregular flying pattern of a white butterfly that just flew into my house, a casual conversation with my dog."

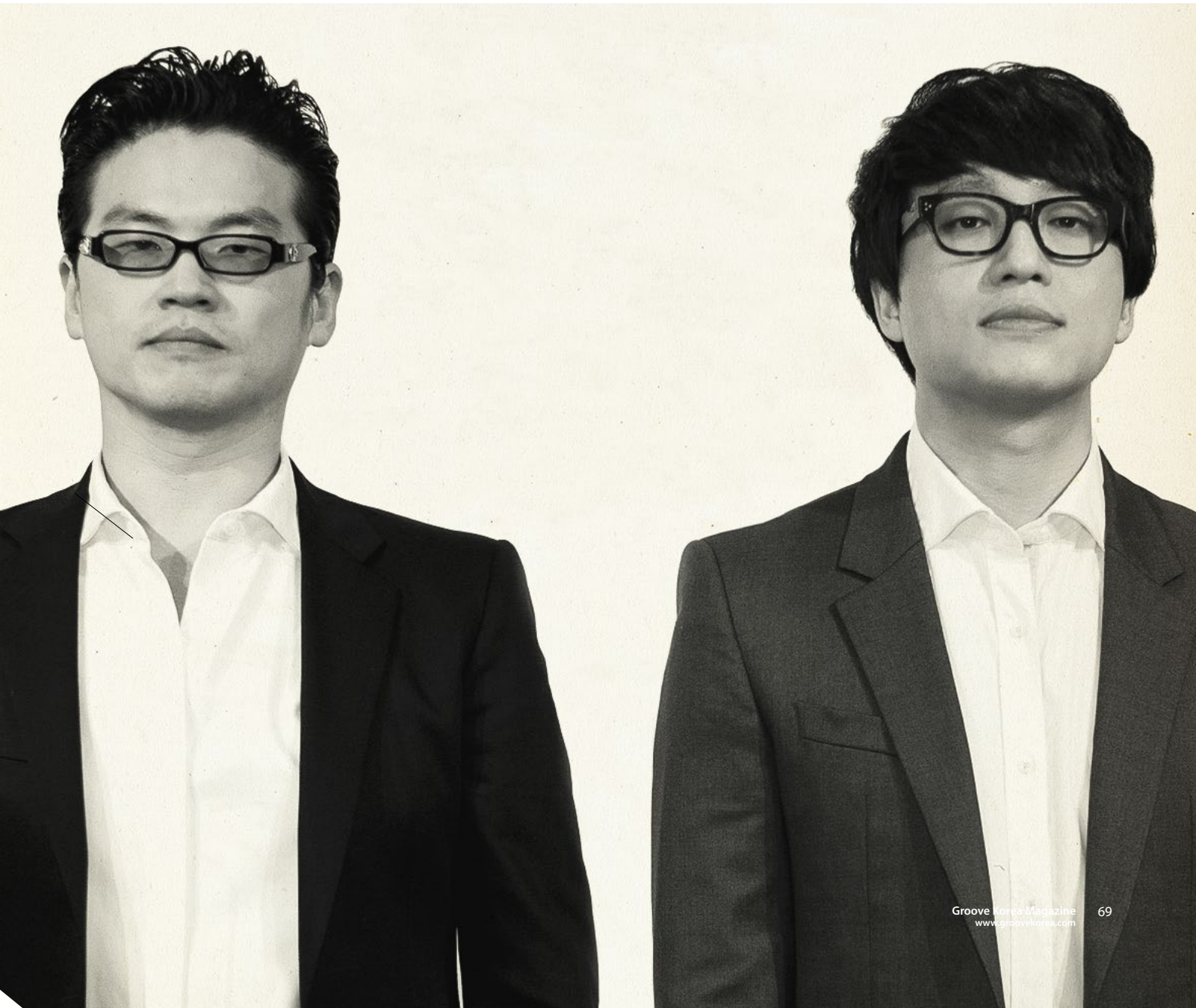
He also gets a large amount of inspiration from South America.

"I am a big fan of Brazilian music. Three big men who have consistently inspired me are Tom Jobim, Chico Buarque and Cartola. They are really my musical navigators throughout my musical career."

For festivalgoers, he has this to say:

"People are people who deserve to enjoy music wherever they are. Of course, here and now, too. Just come and let's listen to the music, breathe the air, dance all night, love, talk, share all the moments we have for ourselves!"

Lucid Fall and Cho Yoon-seong will take the stage on July 28.



Taru:
Hongdae princess blows you pop song bubbles

Interview by Ethan Thomas

> Singer-songwriter and dream-pop sensation Taru has been gaining popularity since she came on the scene. Her voice was used in the drama "Secret Garden" and in many commercials. She's cute and fun and really positive: "I don't want music to sound like a tiring and bitter reality," Taru told Groove Korea magazine over email. "I want my music to actually be something sublime, something that transcends reality." She's certainly a kid at heart. Music videos have her wearing a clown's nose and blowing bubbles. "The energy of youth carries with it infinite possibilities," she said. "I'm tired of macho people and people that try to be too sophisticated. I play music that's young and playful. I'm trying to evoke the innocent passion of a rock kid."

But when the conversation turns to the music industry, she does not seem cheerful or optimistic about the fad-driven nature of the industry. "The system of the current Korean music industry is crap from the profit-share perspective. The people who create music make the least profit and no one seems to question it. I guess this drives musicians to carry on only with and for their passion.

"Trends are not really helpful in the art world. They hinder originality and drive movements to a profit-making point. They get in the way of diversity and variety." In terms of her performance at Jisan Valley Rock Festival, Taru sees it as a kind of proving ground for her as a musician. "Playing at the festival is significant to me in the sense that I'm actually trying something new and it's my maiden voyage into the major music scene … It's going to be a very personal and sweet experience."

Taru is excited to see Elvis Costello & The Impostors at Jisan. "They are a vast dictionary in the history of pop music. As a musician, seeing a performance by (them) is an opportunity to learn and broaden my perspective. For the fans at Jisan she would like to say, "Isn't it wonderful that we are drawn to the same space? This is actually happening."

Taru hits the stage on July 28.



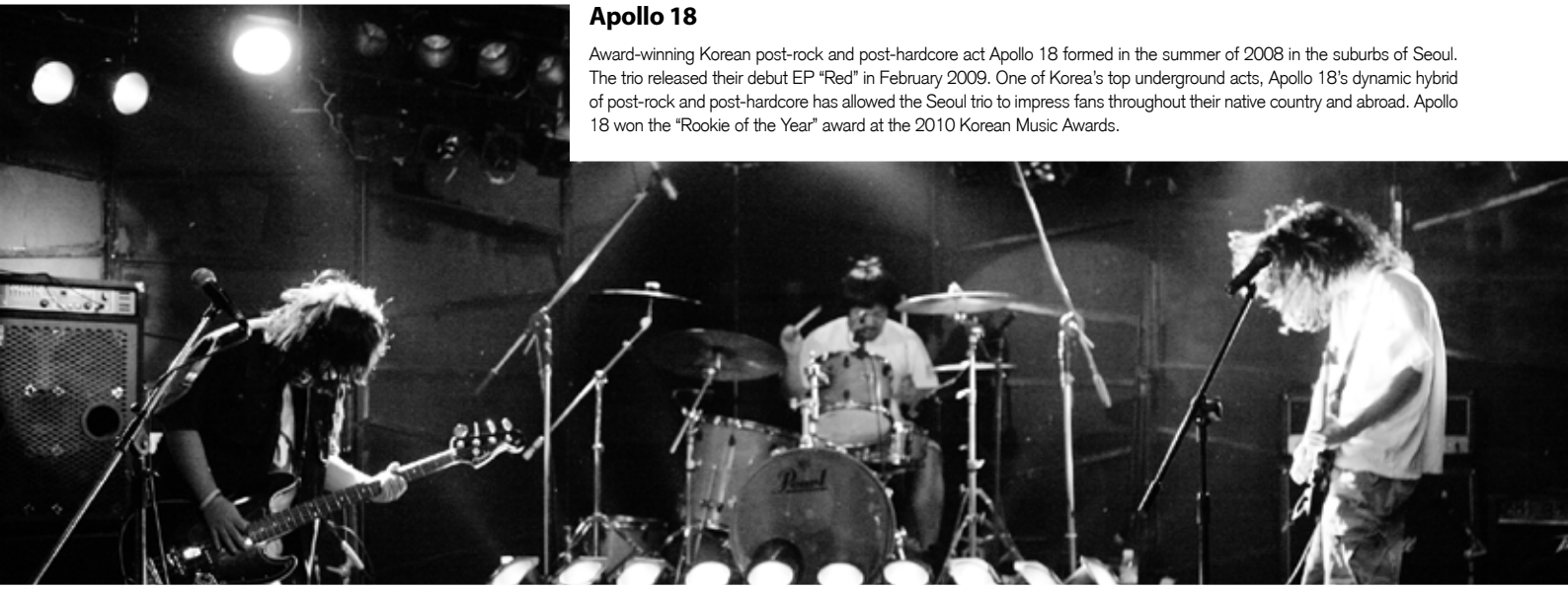
Jisan's don't miss

Radiohead

Every noraebang book in Korea has "Creep." This is the first time Radiohead's come to Korea and it's going to be a major event. It would be hard to find a band more emulated in young music styles here. Since the release of "Pablo Honey" in 1993, the band has steadily grown into one of the biggest bands in the world. They've released eight regular albums, the last being "The King of Limbs." They are arguably the most sought-after live performers for Korean fans. This is going to be a big deal.



Jisan's don't miss



Apollo 18

Award-winning Korean post-rock and post-hardcore act Apollo 18 formed in the summer of 2008 in the suburbs of Seoul. The trio released their debut EP "Red" in February 2009. One of Korea's top underground acts, Apollo 18's dynamic hybrid of post-rock and post-hardcore has allowed the Seoul trio to impress fans throughout their native country and abroad. Apollo 18 won the "Rookie of the Year" award at the 2010 Korean Music Awards.



Lowdown 30

Heavy on the alternative rock Lowdown 30 is a three-member rock band that formed in 2000. A little like the Black Keys with a bass player, they focus on blues. With the successful release of the debut album "Jaira" in 2008 and follow-up EP in 2010, they receive plenty of praise from both critics and fans



The Stone Roses

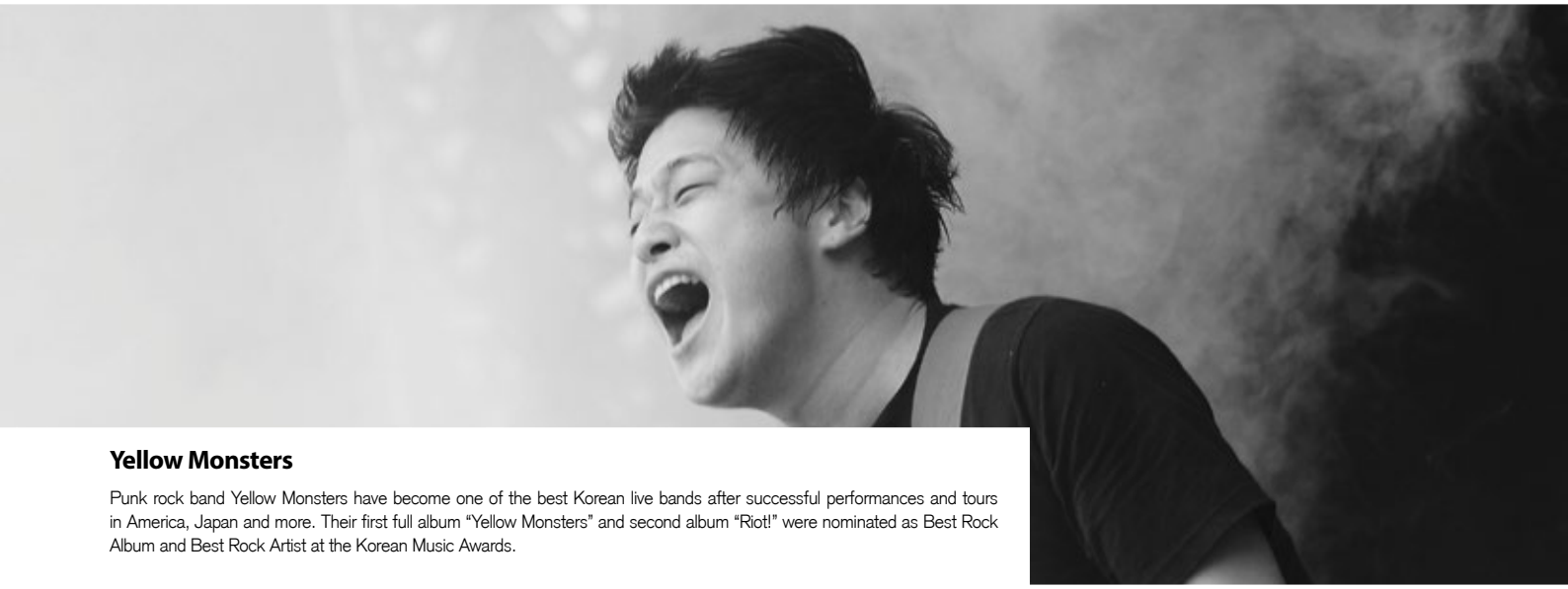
The Stones Roses, a rock band from Manchester, United Kingdom, is loved and supported by fans all over the world. The first step, their debut album in 1989, was a success. They embody the "Manchester Sound," which is described as rock music people can dance to. In 2011, 15 years after they broke up, The Stone Roses reunited and headlined many festivals. The band has successfully remade itself once again.

Jisan's don't miss



Beady Eye

Beady Eye is an English rock band, made up of some members from Oasis, including Liam Gallagher. Since the forming of the band, they have released one album "Different Gear, Still Speeding" in 2011 with a second expected to follow in summer of 2012. They've been known to play Oasis songs at concerts.



Yellow Monsters

Punk rock band Yellow Monsters have become one of the best Korean live bands after successful performances and tours in America, Japan and more. Their first full album "Yellow Monsters" and second album "Riot!" were nominated as Best Rock Album and Best Rock Artist at the Korean Music Awards.



James Iha

Playing guitar with the Smashing Pumpkins from 1987 to 2000, James Iha released his first solo album, "Let It Come Down" in 1998. The record was not just warm and powerful and completely different, but also confirmed Iha's talent as a songwriter. Since then he's been involved with many other projects, including A Perfect Circle and Tinted Windows.



Some of the others

Friday

Black Bag

Black Bag was founded in 2008 and made their name in the live clubs around Hongdae. They then released a self-produced EP and performed at various music festivals. Black Bag released an official EP on Jan. 11, 2012, and also passed the second round of KBS's "Top Band."

Achime

Through their first full-length album "Hunch," released in 2010, Achime not only showed potential, but also started building a solid fan base. After taking some time to organize the internal side, the band released the EP "Hyperactivity" in May 2011. They're melodic and joyful. Should be a lot of fun.

M. Ward

When Portland, Oregon's Matt Ward isn't playing with Zooey Deschanel as the him in "She and Him," he's writing his own folk songs. M. Ward likes to rock. He's been on the "Monsters of Folk" tour with Conor Oberst of Bright Eyes and Jim James of My Morning Jacket, and his live shows get pretty fun.

The Black Skirts

The Black Skirts is a one-man band made up of singer-songwriter Holiday Cho. Since the release of his second album, "Don't You Worry Baby (I'm Only Swimming)" in July 2011, the band has been on the up-and-up. Heavily influenced by veteran punk bands Crying Nut and No Brain, the Black Skirts will bring the rock. The punk rock, that is.

Saturday

Underwears Band

Maybe the best post-rock band in Korea. Underwears Band formed as a project group in 2000. The band got its start playing in Hongdae and then its songs spread on the Internet. It is significant in that it actually opened a new door for the Korean indie scene by being experimental, a rare thing from Korean indie bands.

The Strikers

The Strikers are a three-member punk band which aim to play happy punk rock but sometimes get sad. They sold the first 500 copies of their demo single without a problem, and were offered album contracts from Korean and Japanese agencies. After a successful start to their career both in Japan and Korea, they recently released their second album in five years.

Hollow Jan

Screamo hardcore band Hollow Jan excited both fans and critics as soon as they released their debut album "Rough Draft in Progress" in December 2006. Nominated for five Korean Music Awards in 2008, the band settled for the best album award. With a combination of lyricism and heaviness, it expresses well both sides of our intense lives. They get a lot of attention for their live shows.

eAeon

eAeon has received awards for "Best Korean Pop Rookie," "Best Modern Rock Album" and "100 best-selling albums." After a five-year hiatus, eAeon returned with his first solo project album, "Guilt-Free," which has reached the top of the Korean indie album chart. vW

Sunday

Nell

Korean indie rock band Nell formed in 1999. While performing at live clubs in Hongdae, they were discovered by Seo Taiji. The band played at both the 2006 and 2007 Pentaport Rock Festival. After a four-year hiatus, they released a new studio album titled "Slip Away."

Los Lonely Boys

A brother band from Texas which plays Latin groove urban blues-rock. Their first single, "Heaven," topped the Billboard adult contemporary chart in 2004. Their first album "Los Lonely Boys" sold 4 million copies in the U.S., and they won the Best Pop Group at the 47th Grammy Awards.

Monni

"Monni" means "mean and greedy" in Korean, and they named themselves this because all the members have a great thirst for music. This band began in 2004, and they pursued sophisticated modern rock. They compose, write lyrics, play the musical instruments, produce and record all their music by themselves.

Hanumpa

With their recent second album release, Hanumpa gained lots of attention from critics and music fans with their deep sound and wide musical spectrum. After a six-year hiatus they joined together as a band and continued their musical journey and won the special award at the "Hello Rookie Final" in 2008. They offer a new, progressive rock model with a mix of psychedelic and alternative.

Elvis Costello and the Imposters

Elvis Costello is a chameleon and a shape-shifter. He can absorb any pop-song style and give it his own spin. Usually articulate. Often insightful. Always fun. The London-born "pop encyclopedia" has been making music since the '70s and isn't slowing down. He's in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and one of the greatest musicians of the modern era.

More info:

Timetable information was not available at time of print. — Ed.


HANWHA RESORTS

GET DIRTY AT

GREEN GROOVE

Groove Korea-sponsored festival is one of this summer's best

Story by Matthew Lamers



Green Groove

When: July 21-22
Where: Boryeong, South Chungcheong Province
Price: 33,000 won per day or 55,000 won for both days
Online: http://greengroove.net

When Busta Rhymes took the stage at last year's Green Groove festival in Boryeong, South Chungcheong Province, it was raining so hard that the festival's organizer said that "his passion and energy were expressed in the form of music in such a way that he reminded us of a beast. That was the moment in which artist, music and audience became one."

With over 25,000 people turning out for the show, it was a smashing success. This year, they're aiming even higher. The goal is 50,000 people to attend the festival, which runs the weekend of July 21 and 22.

Overlook the Green Groove festival at your own peril, for this is shaping up to be one of the best weekends of music on the peninsula. (Plus, you get free beer for picking up trash.) A few people we talked to who attended in 2011 described it as diverse, energetic and just plain fun. Whereas other festivals tend to zero-in on one or two genres, the music at the Green Groove festival comes in all forms.

From hip-hop, R&B, electronic, indie-rock, ska-punk and even K-pop, they try to cover all kinds of music. This year's top draw looks to be multi-platinum-selling music artist and producer Akon. Infected Mushroom, the popular electronic band from Israel, is also making an appearance. Big Korean names include Delispice and 10cm.

Festival organizers said they were surprised at the number of expats that attended the festival in its first year last year. The stacked lineup that included Busta Rhymes, Afrojack, apl.de.ap of the Black Eyed Peas and Daishi Dance didn't hurt, either. And they told Groove Korea that they would be even more prepared to accommodate the crowd this time around.

"Honestly, we did not expect that many foreigners would come to the festival (in 2011)," said a spokesperson. "Surprisingly, perhaps due to the world-class line-up, many foreigners came and enjoyed it. This year, with the knowledge gained from last year's experience, we extended our marketing and services to foreigners from the beginning. Notably, we scheduled the festival so it falls at the same time as the mud festival, which attracts more than 200,000 foreigners."

The Boryeong Mud Festival (July 14 to July 24) and the Green Groove festival both take place on Daecheon Beach in the city of Boryeong.

It seems every music festival has a cause these days, and Green Groove is on the side of environmentalism. "We hope to raise awareness of environmental issues and to send out the message that saving the environment can be as fun as enjoying the festival," said the spokesperson.

"The earth is not disposable. We must hand it down to the next generation. A cigarette butt can start a fire in seconds. Getting rid of cigarette litter can be one way to start saving our earth. It's that simple."

What better incentive to save the environment than to get a free beer? Just bring some trash to one of the designated booths and walk away with a cold one.

> "(Busta Rhymes') passion and energy were expressed in the form of music in such a way that he reminded us of a beast. That was the moment in which artist, music and audience became one."
>
> — Organizer

Overlook the Green Groove festival at your own peril, for this is truly one of the best two days of music on the peninsula. Plus, you get free beer for picking up trash.

Green Groove's don't miss

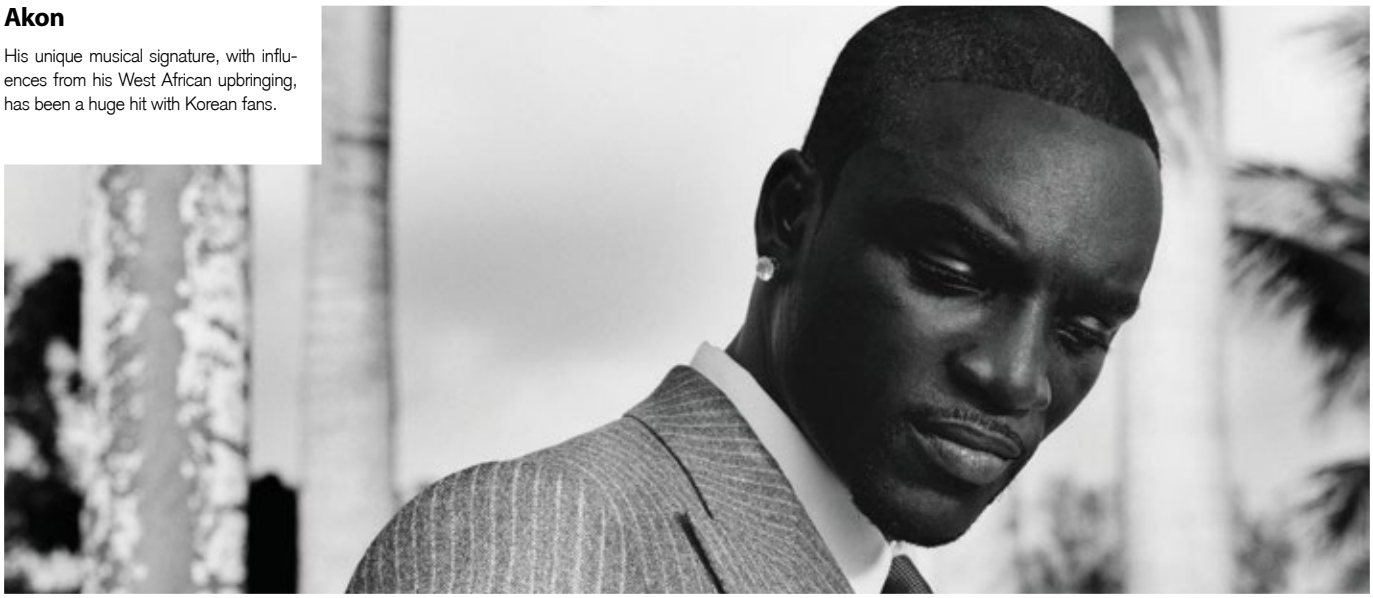


Mighty Mouse

Mighty Mouse is a Korean alternative hip hop duo that formed in 2005.
Sang-chu and Shorry J have made 12 music videos together.

Akon

His unique musical signature, with influences from his West African upbringing, has been a huge hit with Korean fans.





10cm

The Korean duo presents delightful folk rhythms and straightforward lyrics. They have been extremely popular in Korea for the last few years.

Kingston Rudieska

The nine-piece band Kingston Rudieska will be at Green Groove this year. An exciting, energetic band that fills any stage — literally and metaphorically — Kingston Rudieska are stepping up to represent ska in Korea.



Infected Mushroom

The electronic band from Israel fascinates clubbers all over the world with its Arabic melodies, sophisticated beats and passionate performances.

House Rulez

This three-member electronic/acid jazz band debuted in 2007. They're also famous for having no lead vocalist. Notable album: Blood Type Love Story.

Delispice

This icon of modern Korean rock is a balance of indie and mass-market music. Their first album is ranked in the top 10 of most people's lists of Korea's top 100 albums of all time.

The Geeks

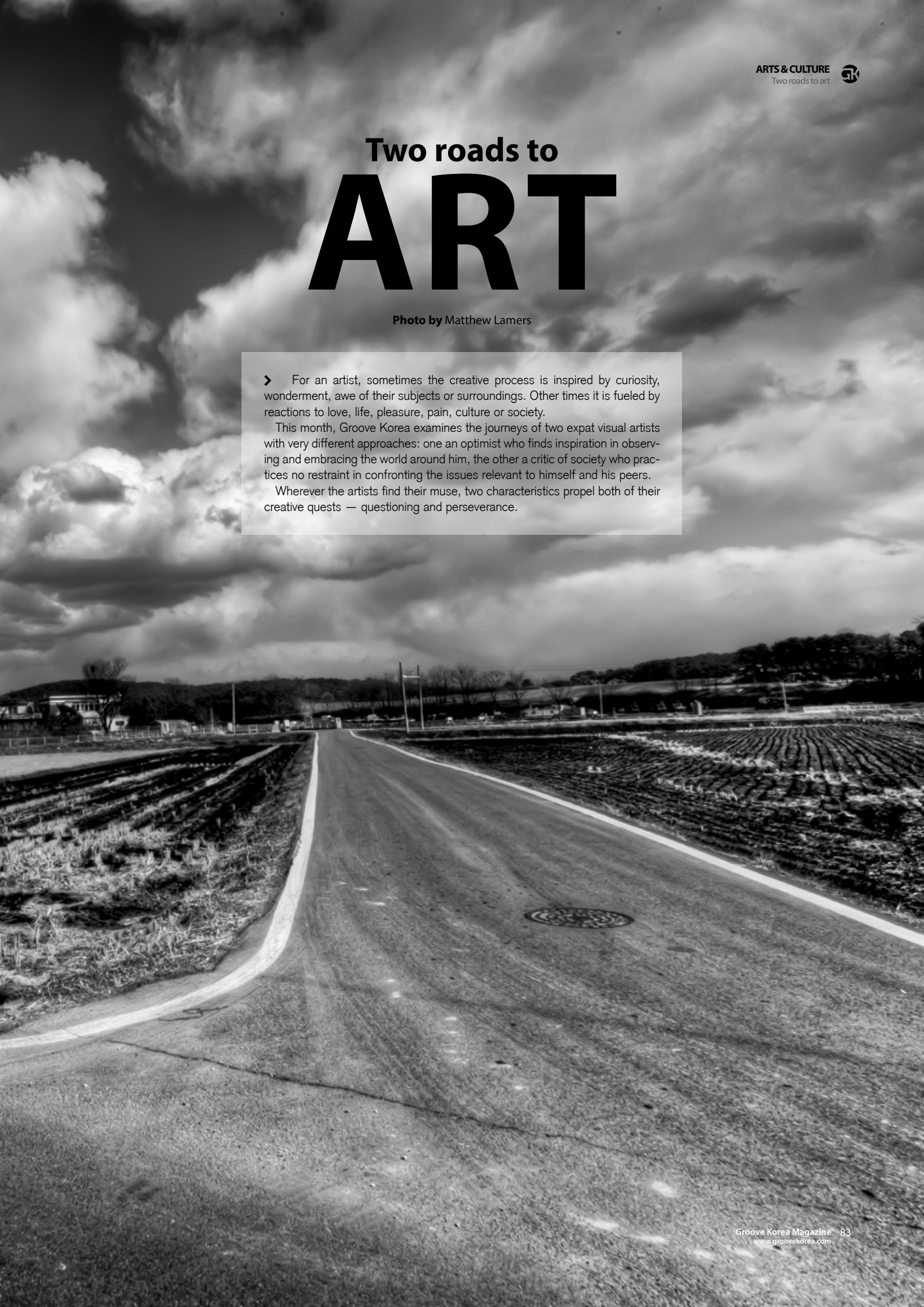
Punk News calls the hardcore band The Geeks Korea's only straight-edge band. They've been together since 2005 and belong to the record label Think Fast! Records / Townhall Records.





Two roads to ART

Photo by Matthew Lamers



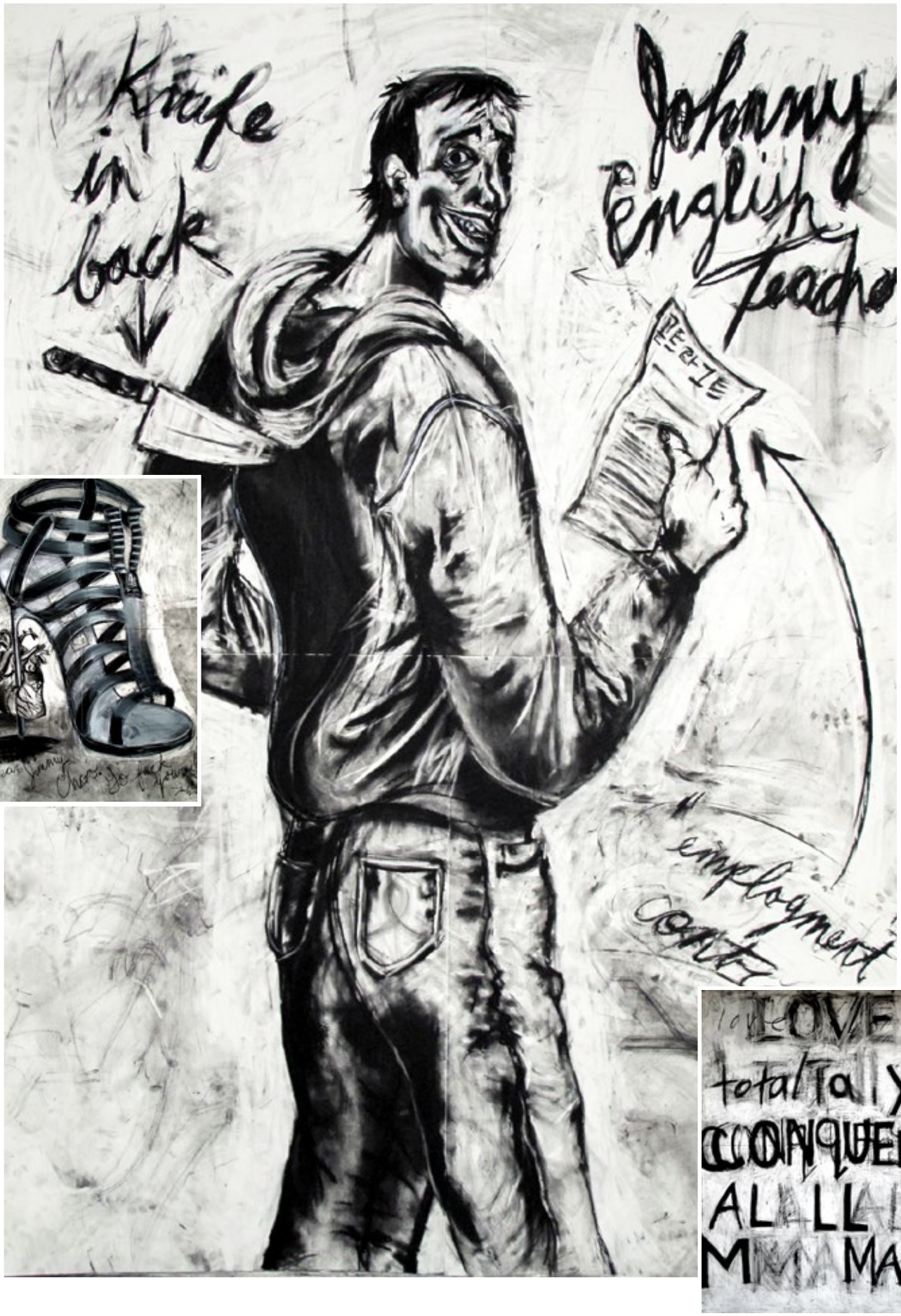
For an artist, sometimes the creative process is inspired by curiosity, wonderment, awe of their subjects or surroundings. Other times it is fueled by reactions to love, life, pleasure, pain, culture or society.

This month, Groove Korea examines the journeys of two expat visual artists with very different approaches: one an optimist who finds inspiration in observing and embracing the world around him, the other a critic of society who practices no restraint in confronting the issues relevant to himself and his peers.

Wherever the artists find their muse, two characteristics propel both of their creative quests — questioning and perseverance.

Artist feature: **Zach Eichelberger**

For more information on Eichelberger's art, visit his blog at zacheichelberger.com



NO ONE'S PANDERER

Story by Daniel Joseph Vorderstrasse / **Art by** Zach Eichelberger

> This is something that art is actually good at doing: creating communication where there is an absence of verbal dialogue. And you can't create that kind of communication by painting niceties or kissing ass or playing into the vanity of a people.
>
> — Zach Eichelberger

As an eight-year expat, American artist Zach Eichelberger has deeply considered the ups and downs of love, lust and life working as a foreigner in Korea — difficult work situations, xenophobia, sexism, disappointment. When he puts his criticisms on paper, he uses black charcoal or a few dark Conté crayons, and none of them are rose-colored.

On the issue of hagwon, Korean after-school academies, his piece "Johnny English Teacher" portrays a teacher stabbed in the back, betrayed by his school, left out to dry in a foreign country with little to no assistance.

"Johnny English Teacher" just scratches the surface of his current series. "I see a lot of foreign artists — and foreign art groups in particular — creating works essentially pandering to Korean vanity. It's as though they expect to win favor with Koreans by incorporating a little Korean-ness into their work," he said.

His recent charcoal on paper, "Be the Ingrates!" mocks the Korean World Cup 2010 motto "Be the Reds!" and challenges what he calls "anti-Americanism, SK style" — the revived mad cow disease scare, widely accused of being protectionist-fueled, which was propelled by rampant protests in 2008 following a reverse on Korea's 2003 ban of U.S. beef imports.

Another work focuses on the English Spectrum debacle that occurred about six years ago. Its critics said the infamous party in Hongdae that started it portrayed the Korean women in attendance as easy targets for foreign men on the prowl. While inaccurate, the accusation was so controversial that it spawned the group Anti-English Spectrum, which has been known to stalk foreigners and propagate an anti-foreigner agenda.

"The message is clearly not 'We care so much for the sanctity of our Korean women that we cannot allow this to happen,'" Eichelberger said. "It is much more, 'We only care about the sanctity of Korean women when foreign men are involved with them.'

"In response to this I drew a big picture with a Korean girl with her legs spread with the words English Spectrum running between with arrows to designate the space. As it turns out, the spectrum of English Spectrum was only about the length of the space between those dancer's legs and the website that was briskly stormed by netizens and ultimately shut down."

While Eichelberger's works are controversial — and no doubt offensive to some — they nonetheless invoke thought and conversation on topics most expats are aware of.

"When I first began work on this series, I simply wanted to address my experience of living in South Korea. A lot of that experience has to do with being a minority here, being an English teacher, and being American," he said. "I'm unaware of any concerted, critical response to the more offensive forms of South Korean xenophobia and nationalism, such as the 'Fucking USA' song, English Spectrum-Gate, the beef protests, or the horrendous situations in which foreign teachers and migrant workers often find themselves where their visa is controlled by their employer."

Most recent of these issues is the May 28 broadcast that aired on Korean news station MBC titled "The shocking reality about relationships with foreigners" (see our feature in this month's Insight section) which depicts expat men as predators upon Korean women, later stealing from them, abandoning them after impregnation or infecting them with HIV. Though expats across the country have voiced their angry reactions to the video, which they call offensively inaccurate, Eichelberger says the complaints may fall on deaf ears until Koreans themselves learn how to self-critique.

"This kind of programming has far too great an influence on a public that isn't accustomed to self-critique … There is a collective voice of hostility in South Korea that is stimulated by the media and consumed by a public that is either too uninterested or unable to critique itself," Eichelberger said. "The MBC 'report' is the English Spectrum-Gate/Hongdae debacle all over again. Unless it is shown for what it is, it will simply continue, and its continuation has the potential of leading to a powder keg of hostility based on misunderstanding."

However, in this void of conversation, he says, is where art can step in: "This is something that art is actually good at doing: creating communication where there is an absence of verbal dialogue. And you can't create that kind of communication by painting niceties or kissing ass or playing into the vanity of a people, some of whom condemn the very people that saved their country and continue to protect it."

Eichelberger also heads the Seoul Art Collective, which he says is the first organization of both Korean and expat artists to mount professional exhibitions in Seoul. He studies Art Program Management by correspondence at the University of Denver and teaches university-level English in Korea.

Eichelberger said he knew that art would be a driving force in his life from a young age. "I looked around at all the stuff and thought this is what I'd like to do because there's a bunch of naked ladies everywhere," he joked.

He refuses to associate himself with one particular artistic style: "Pursuing a style is also a waste of time. Style is just what you arrive at after investigating what you want to do."

Eichelberger says he will continue working on the present series until he feels it's completed. He contributed his work "Spinners" to the Global Myeongdong Art Festival at the Myeongdong Gallery which opened June 13. He also says he has made a proposal to another gallery for an exhibition titled "Blow Your Brains Out, Then Eat Them," which includes his current work.

"I'm not sure it will ever see the light of day, but I'm trying for it," he said.

> Pursuing a style is also a waste of time. Style is just what you arrive at after investigating what you want to do.
>
> — Zach Eichelberger

THE JOURNEY OF AN ARTIST

Story by Rajnesh Sharma / **Art by** Wilfred Lee



Artist feature: **Wilfred Lee**

To view Wilfred Lee's artwork, visit his website, wilfred-lee.blogspot.com, or join his "Artist's Journey" on Facebook at facebook.com/groups/artist-sjourney.

"To be an artist is to observe life"

— Wilfred Lee

Filled with years of dedication, self-discovery and rejection, the quest of becoming an artist is challenging enough as it is. Throw in a venture into a new world, where communication is difficult and opportunities are hidden. How is it possible to overcome such obstacles? For expat Wilfred Lee, the artistic journey is a story characterized by questioning, perseverance, humility, optimism and a bit of artistic magic. Lee, like most anyone, first began exploring the world through the curious eyes of a child. Inspired by the wonderment of his surroundings, he picked up a pencil and began to draw. He would spend hours happily exploring his artistic abilities, unaware at the time that these creations were to shape his destiny. His interest in creating drawings simply provided him with an outlet for internal expression.

This is where his journey as an artist began. By immersing himself in comics, games, animations and movies, he started to develop his own ideas and wanted them to come to life. "I wanted to be part of that magical process of creating life from an idea," he said.

His passion for this process led the Canada native to study animation arts at Seneca College at York University, where teachers inspired him with the life stories of master artists of yore such as da Vinci, Michelangelo, Picasso and Dali. It was there that he also got to indulge his interest in the pre-production process for creating art and understand "the collaboration of people to create a project bigger than yourself."

Shortly after completing his formal studies, a yearning to learn more about his father's culture led the young artist to Korea. Like many expats here, Lee's early years in Korea were spent in a classroom. It didn't take long, however, for Lee to hatch a plan to transition into the art world.



Clint Eastwood
Wilfred Lee



Nude
Wilfred Lee

He was ambitious, with a goal in mind: to secure a job as a concept designer, one who manages the pre-production process of an artistic project, from visualizing story ideas to planning a tangible product. He created and submitted his art portfolios, but time and time again he was rejected. He felt disheartened, confused and frustrated. "My first year in Itaewon, I just wanted to be an artist," he said. "I made this really huge book and it was really personal stuff. I remember going to different places and they were just rejecting me. I had no idea about the art world (in Korea). And later on, I would still do art, but I was feeling really down, of course."

Nevertheless, Lee's determination to grow as an artist prevailed. "No matter what job I had which may seem it was in the different direction, I would always have art that was a catharsis (for) problems in my life," he said. He eventually enrolled in classes to study the art of caricature. "My techniques, whatever I did as an artist, were being translated through the art of caricature."

Soon, during his spare time, Lee was drawing caricatures at Lotte World, Namsan Tower and in Insadong. Further, creating caricatures as fine art opened up a door into the tight-knit community of local artists, he said. By his second year in Korea, an opportunity surfaced at his workplace. As a kindergarten teacher, he had exposed his incredible talent for drawing. His director, who recognized Lee's skills, proposed a project to create illustrations for English textbooks. Lee seized the opportunity and spent the next year completing the artistic work for those textbooks as well as teaching art classes.

Amid these opportunities, Lee felt he still had more to improve upon as an artist. Another turning point in his journey as a burgeoning artist came when he discovered the International Artist Community (IAC). The community consists of talented artists, Koreans and foreigners, who live in Korea and share their creative ideas and styles. "Art is a very personal thing," he said. "It's very common to be by yourself and it is a very isolating process, but to go out and meet people, do life-drawings together, do caricature with people ... you see their styles. It doesn't matter where they vary but you get influences."

> "You don't need a lot to draw; you just need to see things. And then when you do that, you appreciate everything around you so much more." **— Wilfred Lee**

Feeling motivated, Lee signed up for life-drawing classes. Every Saturday he would head to Myeong-dong in central Seoul to gain inspiration from other artists. He experimented with different tools and materials and learned new drawing styles. Eventually, having exhibited extraordinary artistic talent yet again, he was offered a chance to teach art classes. Accepting the opportunity, he began to teach caricature, figure drawing, life drawing, concept design and animal design.

Lee also teaches the importance of observation to his art students. "To be an artist is to observe life," he states confidently. It is this observation, he insists, that elevates him to a whole new sense of awareness of his surroundings and people. "I just believe art is such a mental activity: like 98 percent mental, 1 percent the hand, the other 1 percent is people. You don't need a lot to draw; you just need to see things. And then when you do that, you appreciate everything around you so much more. You look at people differently and it's like a 4th or 5th dimension."

After a year of teaching art classes, Lee still longed to fulfill his original desire of becoming a concept designer. His persistence finally paid off when he landed a job with the Nexen Mobile gaming company — becoming the first-ever foreigner in Korea to be hired as a concept designer in a company of 500 or more employees.

One year later, Lee moved on to Centum Interactive and currently continues to work as a concept designer for its new company Wisekids. "(This) is just the beginning in fulfilling a lifelong goal," he said. "I am constantly learning something new about the field, both aesthetically and technologically ... It humbles you into realizing there's always a higher level of knowledge to achieve." In his free time, he creates art exhibitions, attends events to do caricatures, makes art tutorials and teaches art classes.

In the near future he plans to hold more seminars and workshops, and complete and share his personal stories, which he has been working on for the past 12 years. Lee claims it is the opportunities he's had in Korea that have continued to lead him on his journey — and the longer he stays in Korea, the more doors continue to open for him. "It's a golden age for foreigners" who have the desire to become a part of the art community, Lee said.



FOSTERING
A CREATIVE COMMUNITY

Story by Daniel Joseph Vorderstrasse

One artist in Seoul has a mission: to create a community where expats and Koreans can express themselves through visual art.

The avenue is Jankura Artspace and the artist is Mike Stewart. Since it opened in January, the multipurpose studio and workspace hasn't seen a dull day. "Jankura's mission is to offer a place where expats can come and learn something or fine tune their skills. It's a little hard to find information on where to find these services, so I'm trying to bring as many services as possible to make it a community hub for Seoul's creative development," said Stewart.

Jankura looks to serve the neighboring art community in four ways. For one, it is a shared studio where artists can rent space to create artwork. Second, classes in drawing, painting, illustration, printmaking and other genres are offered for those wanting to learn the trades. Next, sessions with models are held regularly for those interested in practicing with living subjects. Finally, Jankura is a workshop center for the community, with guest artists and artisans holding workshops and lessons.

Jankura Artspace is a creative community; it is not limited to visual arts, but is open to any type of artistic expression.

> "Jankura's mission is to offer a place where expats can come and learn something or fine tune their skills."
>
> –Artist Mike Stewart



The Jankura Artspace director practices sketching to fine-tune his technical drawing skills.

MIKE STEWART'S STORY

Mike Stewart knew from the first grade that art would dominate his life. "I drew a picture of a dog and somebody in my class bought it for 25 cents. I re-produced that dog (for) other students in class and sold them," said Stewart. From that day on, art would be at the forefront in his studies and life.

"I have never been interested in sports, music or any other subject. It has always been art. Even when out and about in Seoul, I want to sketch people, similar to capturing images with a camera," said Stewart. "I particularly enjoy live action drawing." There was a period of time in his life, though, where Stewart lost his way in a seven-year absence from art.

"One day, I found a box easel on the side of the road and had to have it. I went to art school, so (I thought) I should go back to my life when I was in art school. I got a canvas and acrylic paints, and made my first piece of art in seven years." He has been producing and teaching art ever since. While teaching art at an academy near Hongik University, he started painting, drawing and printmaking regularly on weekends. After creating works, a show was scheduled.

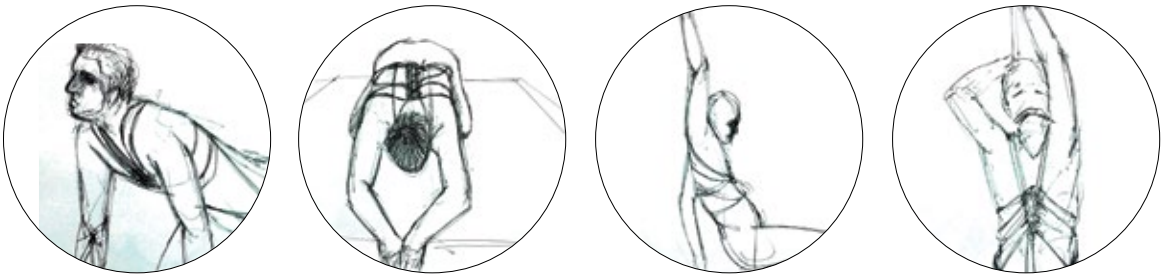
He has since participated in about 30 exhibitions in the more than six years he has been in Seoul.

Printmaking is the core of his works, but in the last year and a half he has shifted to drawing and fine-tuning his technical drawing skills.

"I felt my drawing (ability) was weak before, so I wanted to improve. In addition, I have dabbled in watercolor and cityscapes to make my work, and talents, better-rounded," he said.

For this artist, a unique trait is his avoidance of an eraser. He does not erase the beginning pencil lines like most sketch artists, but works rapidly with pen. The finished product gives the piece another dimension and energy that lacks in other artists' sketches.

"My work is energetic with a sort of chaos trying to be controlled slowly through the production of the piece," he said. "I start with extreme energy and bring it around, forming an image leaving the original attack I began with."



Artist feature:
Mike Stewart

These are some of his sketches.



For more information on Jankura Artspace, visit its website, mstewartprintmaker.com/jankura.htm.

ART CLASSES AVAILABLE AT JANKURA ARTSPACE:

Tuesdays, 6–9 p.m.
Drawing or painting

Thursdays, 6–9 p.m.
Watercolor painting

Fridays, 9–12 a.m.
Drawing or painting (by appointment)

Fridays (every other week), 7:30–9:30 p.m.
Long pose life drawing

Saturdays,12–5 p.m.
Weekend watercolor workshops

Saturdays, 6–8 p.m.
Life drawing nude and/or costumed models

Sundays (every other week), 2:30–7:30 p.m.
Oil painting and other workshops

RATES FOR ART CLASSES:

3 months (12 classes) = 250,000 won
1 month (4 classes) = 90,000 won
1 time walk-in = 25,000 won

Rates for weekend watercolor sessions:
Full course (10 sessions) = 250,000 won
4 sessions = 100,000 won
1 session = 30,000 won
Monthly Printmaking and Oil Painting Workshops = 40,000 won (contact for details)

Directions: To get to Jankura Artspace, leave Itaewon Station (Line 6) at Exit 3 and make a U-turn. Turn left at Quiznos and walk past Taco Bell for 5-7 minutes. Turn left at the 3-way intersection. Jankura Artspace is on the 4th floor of the corner building.





AT THE BOX OFFICE

JULY RELEASES

By Dean Crawford

THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN

Director: Mac Webb



July **28** ***Action - Adventure*** *96 Minutes*

P R E V I E W

Sam Raimi's "Spider-Man" was a real treat for fans of the genre.

I personally loved seeing Spidey swinging through New York City and Doctor Octopus in "Spider-Man 2" was one of the best super villains I've ever seen. Sadly, "Spider-Man 3" was a poor continuation of the series, with too many characters and a poor storyline, not to mention the quite bizarre emo incarnation of Peter Parker disco-dancing in the streets.

There was talk of a fourth film with Raimi and Toby Maguire attached, but instead the superhero has been reinvented as "The Amazing Spider-Man" directed by Marc Webb, with Brit Andrew Garfield as the web slinger himself.

Whereas Raimi's "Spider-Man" focused predominantly on the tribulations of an adult Peter Parker, Webb's film is taking a look at Parker's past and his struggle over his missing parents.

"The Amazing Spider-Man" shows Peter Parker's rise from nerdy teenager to superhero after he gains the super strength and agility of a spider.

However, it turns out that this event might not have been an accident. His fate appears connected with that of Dr. Curt Connors, who is transformed into The Lizard. As well as Andrew Garlfield, Emma Stone plays love interest Gwen Stacy, Rhys Ifans is Dr. Curt Connors/The Lizard, and Sally Field and Martin Sheen play Aunt May and Uncle Ben, respectively. One of the biggest changes from the first set of films is the look of the Spider-Man costume. I think the new look, which has taken its inspiration from the "ultimate" version of Spider-Man comic books, looks great. Another difference from Sam Raimi's "Spider-Man" is that they have gone back to using artificial web shooters rather than webs flying from his wrists.

Another big decision taken in the reboot was to film the movie in 3D and to shoot a lot of the action from Spider-Man's point of view.

It's a risky choice, as the POV footage from the first trailer reminded me of being in one of those cheap 4D rides you find in shopping malls and fairgrounds.

Most of the footage released since that first trailer looks awesome, and it's important to note that while there may be some CGI POV shots, the director tried to do most of the action in camera to give it more of a "real world" feel.

While it might not turn out to be the best superhero film of the summer, my spidey sense is tingling and I can't wait to see the web slinger in action.

THE DARK KNIGHT RISES

Director: Christopher Nolan



July **19** ***Action - Adventure*** *165 Minutes*

P R E V I E W

As far as trailers go, the latest for "The Amazing Spider-Man" looked pretty impressive and daring. Impressive visually, but a daring tagline: "The most anticipated film of the summer." While I might be pretty excited to see it, is it really "the most anticipated film of the summer?" Not a chance. That title goes to "The Dark Knight Rises." Sorry Spidey.

"The Dark Knight Rises" is set eight years after the final events of "The Dark Knight." Taking responsibility for the crimes of Harvey Dent, Batman is forced to retire as the police continue to hunt him down. However, after the rise of a master criminal, Bane, Batman is forced to return and protect the city of Gotham once again. In what will be his final appearance as the caped crusader, Christian Bale returns as Batman, as do regulars Gary Oldman, Morgan Freeman and Michael Caine. New additions to the cast are British actor Tom Hardy as Bane and Anne Hathaway as Catwoman.

If "Batman Begins" broke the mold in terms of what a superhero film should be, "The Dark Knight" obliterated it. Serious, dark and edgy, it was a critical and commercial success, breaking all kinds of box-office records and earning a posthumous Academy Award for Heath Ledger.

The release of "Inception" cemented Christopher Nolan's status as one of the most exciting directors of the modern era, fully capable of making large-scale blockbusters that challenged instead of pandered to its audience. Excitement for "The Dark Knight Rises" is palpable.

But can "The Dark Knight Rises" really match or surpass the previous film? Die hard fans are going on blind faith, saying "yes," but there have been mixed reactions to the footage and trailers shown thus far, with the bulk of complaints focusing on Bane's dialogue. The super villain gets his strength from a constant "venom" source pumped in through his mask, which of course affects the way he speaks. By all accounts, the footage of Bane in action from Comic-con looked amazing.

One of the things I'm looking forward to seeing in "TDKR" is how the relationship between Batman and Bane pans out.

In the comics, Bane is famously known as the only man to "break the bat," crippling Bruce Wayne and forcing him to pass over the Batman identity. Certain shots in the trailer show Bruce Wayne older, skinnier and using a walking stick. Batman also tells Catwoman that he hasn't given "everything ... not yet." Ominous signs indeed, but surely they can't kill off Batman.

Or can they?

KOREAN DVD CORNER

JULY REVIEWS

By Daniel Joseph Vorderstrasse

COUNTDOWN

Director: Heo Jong-ho



PG-16 | *Action - Drama* | *119 Minutes*

R E V I E W

Heo Jong-ho makes his directorial debut with a dramatic action flick that pits one man against a supreme deadline, as he must find a donor for his failing liver. Tae Gun-ho (Jeong Jae-yeong) searches through his past to find a contributor. Along the way he must overcome his demons. Tae's son died years prior and donated his organs to four people. He seeks out those recipients to ask if they will help him with his cause. He's unsuccessful, as they are spread across the globe or are otherwise unable to donate.

He has 10 days to find a donor or he's a dead man.

Busan plays host to this gritty drama.

Cha Ha-yeon (Jeon Do-yeon) is a match, but she is imprisoned for fraud. The former Miss Spring Beauty seduced the rich for their fortunes. She had men lining up to give her their money before she would vanish without a trace. She agrees to the transplant on one condition — Gun-ho must track down the person who ratted her out, causing her incarceration. He offers to hand over his life savings instead, but she insists that it is her way or the deal is off. Cho Myung-seok (Lee Kyeong-yeong) is the perp he has to find, but there is no record of his existence. Gun-ho uses all the people and means at his disposal in his search for Myung-seok.

After Ha-yeon is released from prison, she is met by Swai (Oh Man-seok), a gangster she swindled. The chase is on. It seems like everyone is out for retribution.

A multitude of chase scenes keep viewers attentive in this great action flick.

A steep incline to the final climax sets you up for a dandy of a finish, where multiple lives are at stake and the outcome could go any way.

It's not another shoot-em-up ending, which is nice. It's good to see people settle things with fists instead of automatic weapons for a change.

Along the way he must overcome his demons. Tae's son died years prior and donated his organs to four people.

RE-ENCOUNTER

Director: Min Yong-geun



PG-14 | *Drama* | *108 Minutes*

R E V I E W

Having debuted at the 15th Pusan International Film Festival (2010), Min Yong-geun presents a dramatic, heart-wrenching story between childhood sweethearts. Yong-geun takes the risk of using little-known actors to portray this tale. It pays off big time.

Hye-hwa (Yoo Da-in) and Han-soo (Yoo Yeon-seok) were high school sweethearts, deeply in love and thought they were destined to spend their lives together.

But after Hye-hwa becomes pregnant, Han-soo GTFO, as they say, fleeing to Canada with no plan to return home. Hye-hwa is given two options — raise the child alone or give it up for adoption. Shortly after birth, the audience is led to believe that the child dies. Hye-hwa enters a deep state of depression.

Han-soo, though, discovers that the child was actually given up for adoption. He lurks outside the adoptive family's home, trying to get a peek at his child.

Han-soo now seeks to reunite with his long-time lover to form the family he abandoned.

Hye-hwa has other ideas. Simply put — she hates him. Undaunted, he asks her to follow him back to Canada.

Han-soo kidnaps his daughter from her kindergarten, with the hope that they could be together like a normal family. The police arrest him for kidnapping. Believe it or not, this is when the surprises begin.

The film is not linear. Flashbacks provide plenty of backstory and context for this convoluted tale. It contains a lethargic beginning, which leaves the viewer a little bored, as nothing seems to be happening in the opening 30 minutes. A dramatic ending, not unique among Korean movies, will torture the viewer's emotion.

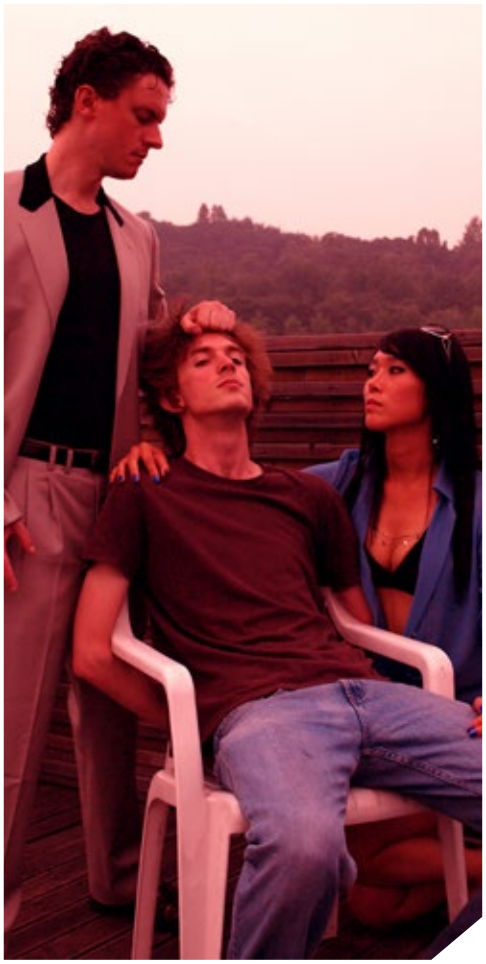
Unfortunately, the film's ending desn't contain enough to make it a worthwhile picture to seek out, as the slow build-up lacks enough to keep your attention. If, by some miracle, you survive until the film's finale, you will not be disappointed with the conclusion.

The film is not linear. Flashbacks provide plenty of backstory and context for this convoluted tale.

SEX, DRUGS AND LYING FRIENDS

'GAUCHO' HITS STAGE IN JULY

Story by Jack Morris / **Photo by** Liam Mitchinson



The feeling of loneliness is no stranger to anyone, particularly expats. For us, old family and friends are literally half a world away. Artists at Probationary Theatre can relate; they are no strangers to friends who have gone separate ways for one reason or another.

This July, they will put on the play "Gaucho" by Doug Lucie. The play will feature an impressive cast — some familiar faces on the White Box stage, along with some newcomers.

"Gaucho" focuses on the relationship between four university friends and their 20-year reunion. Throughout the play, the audience discovers that no one is really as they seem. "Not one character in this play is likeable. But vehemently hating everyone on stage can make for an enjoyable night of theater," said artistic director Desiree Munro, who will play Louise.

Natalia Park — playing Yana in the show — agrees with Munro. "I like the fact that, even though this is a situation that most of the audience members will probably never be in, everyone will identify with at least one, if not more, of the characters. The writing is very realistic, dark and incisive. It captures all of the human flaws and twisted motives." "Gaucho" follows the story of Declan Moss, an Oxford University graduate who has become one of the world's biggest drug smugglers. Even though at times we see the toll the drug business has taken on his psyche, Moss still holds rigidly to what he believes in and feels he is trying to change the world. Bringing him to life is a newcomer to the Korean stage, Jason Cutler.

Cutler said he enjoyed the "biting, uncompromising humor and the anarchistic world view."

Director Robert Jay Moore is not quite a new face at White Box, having written and directed several of the Play in a Day pieces as well as being previously involved in the local improv troupe Seoul City Improv. However, this will be his first play directed on the main stage for Probationary Theatre.

"I chose this play because of the characters," he said. "Each and every one of them is so much deeper than you may think at first. Each character goes through a sort of unraveling throughout the play where we get to see their darkest sides and dirtiest secrets."

Moore said he doesn't have a favorite character. "It sounds cliché, but I can't pick just one. Without one of them, the play would be useless. Lucie did a fantastic job of revealing all the inner workings of each character that kept me on the edge of my seat when I read it."

For whoever may get bored of character development, don't worry. "Gaucho" also features plenty of dirty action as well. "It injects theater with sex, drugs, violence and bad language. If modern theater is supposed to represent modern times, why aren't we seeing more plays like this?" said Munro.

> "It injects theater with sex, drugs, violence and bad language. If modern theater is supposed to represent modern times, why aren't we seeing more plays like this?"
>
> **— Artistic director, Desiree Munro**

DIRECTIONS:

White Box Theatre is a 3-minute walk from Hyochang Park subway station, line 6, exit 2.

DETAILS:

"Gaucho" will be performed on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from July 13 to July 22. Tickets are 15,000 won.

TICKETS:

For advanced ticket bookings and more information, visit the Probationary Theatre website, www.probationarytheatre.com.



WAITING FOR DEFINITIVE FICTION ON

NORTH KOREA

By Rob York

THE ORPHAN MASTER'S SON
By Adam Johnson

Random House

464 pages. Available at What The Book? in Itaewon.

Jun Do's story of abducting Japanese civilians, becoming a translator, traveling to Texas on a diplomatic mission and then assuming the name of the fearsome Commander Ga has little to do with the life of the average Northerner.

It's tempting to look at "The Orphan Master's Son" as a watershed moment: North Korea watchers (including me) regularly complain about how little the outside world knows about the rogue regime that the U.S. and South Korea have technically been at war with since 1950, and decry how this ignorance negatively affects policy. Human rights activists regularly lament the lack of "awareness" of the regime's crimes, and how much its citizens need outside help.

Plus, anyone who has met a North Korean defector knows there's an untapped treasure trove of stories to be told. Now along comes "Orphan Master," written by critically acclaimed novelist and Stanford University professor Adam Johnson, with a story that could potentially open many eyes to the tragedy and comedy to be found north of the 38th parallel.

The story of Jun Do — a young man who grows up in a home for orphans, takes part in expeditions kidnapping Japanese, and who eventually assumes the identity of one of the North's great heroes — has received acclaim from many corners, including reviewers at The Washington Post and Wall Street Journal. Johnson has clearly done his homework, accurately capturing details large and small, from Northern soldiers' fear of harsh punishment when missions go awry, to the homophobia and obsession with virginal purity found in their propaganda, to even how they count years starting with Kim Il-sung's birthday.

There are also instances that touchingly capture the humanity of North Koreans in an inhumane system: A father tells his son that there may come a day when he, the boy, must denounce his father as an "imperialist puppet" for the sake of survival, and assures his son that he will understand should that day arrive. The hero, alone with a lover who has come to hate Kim Jong-il and his regime, utters the opening line to "The Yellow Rose of Texas" because it's the only part he knows of the only (Western) song he's ever heard and the only (North Korean) one that has nothing to do with the Kim clan.

These moments, though, are spread out within a story that, while imaginative, is not really what the world needs to hear about North Korea.

Jun Do's story of abducting Japanese civilians, becoming a translator, traveling to Texas on a diplomatic mission and then assuming the name of the fearsome North Korean Commander Ga has little to do with the life of the average Northerner. Its serious tone (and disorienting POV changes) also eliminates it from consideration as Ian Fleming-style escapism.

"Your Republic is Calling You" by Kim Young-ha, released in English in 2010, tells a story that rings truer, and I don't think that's just because Kim is Korean. It's an unusual circumstance, to be sure: A North Korean spy must live as a South Korean for 20 years before being called home, but it effectively illustrated the difference between a regular South Korean's life and that of his Northern counterparts.

Aravind Adiga's "The White Tiger" in 2008 attempted a similar task as "Orphan Master," to capture the injustices and absurdities of Indian society, but Johnson's book lacks "Tiger's" believable story, boundless wit and insider's eye.

And even though Johnson, as a novelist, has the option of making up the details, "Orphan Master" cannot match true stories of North Korea like Barbara Demick's "Nothing to Envy" or Kang Chol-Hwan's "Aquariums of Pyongyang" in terms of either horror or eventual triumph.

Perhaps Johnson believed that it would take an epic story such as Jun Do's to earn widespread attention. In a way I hope he is right, because more attention would certainly be a good thing: The North Koreans currently suffering from malnutrition and persecution need the spotlight; South Koreans, who long for unity, need the help, and those who want to tell great stories would have plenty of material to work with.

After "Orphan Master," though, I feel the definitive fictional account of North Korea is still to be told.

Have an exhibit?
You can add your exhibit by emailing Matthew Lamers at mattlamers@groovekorea.com

20 (mostly) foreign

Exhibits

1
Artist name:
Leandro Erlich
Exhibition name:
Inexistence
Running Dates:
thru July 7
Location:
Song Eun Art Space (Cheongdam stn, ln 7 ex 9, turn right before Prada)
Medium:
installation

2
Artist name:
Lim Anna
Exhibition name:
irony - addicted
Running Dates:
thru July 11
Location:
Jean Art Galley (Gyeongbokgung stn, ln 3 ex 3, located alongside palace)
Medium:
mixed-media, paintings

3
Artist name:
Eelco Brand
Exhibition name:
The illusionary camera
Running Dates:
thru July 11
Location:
Gallery Lumiere (Gwanghwamun stn, ln 5, ex 7; turn right before Seoul History Museum, veer left 150m)
Medium: photography

4
Artist name:
Jan Saudek
Exhibition name:
Photo Exhibition Korea 2012
Running Dates:
Trought June 3
Location:
Insa Art Center (Anguk stn, ln 3 ex 6, middle of Insadong's main street)
Medium:
photography

5
Artist name:
BG Muhn
Exhibition name:
Love Affair of the Empress
Running Dates:
thru July 15
Location:
Gallery Skape (Hangangjin stn, ln 6; best reached by taxi, 32-23 Hannam-dong)
Medium:
paintings

6
Artist name:
Joan Miro
Exhibition name:
untitled
Running Dates:
thru July 18
Location:
Juliana Gallery (Cheongdam stn, ln 7 ex 8, follow road as veers left, turn left at KDB Bank, make first left again)
Medium: paintings, drawings, prints

7
Artist name:
5 UK-based Contemporary Artists
Exhibition name:
Mind the Gap 2012
Running Dates:
thru July 18
Location:
Lotte Gallery, Jungdong (Bucheon stn, ln 1; bus 5-3, 5-5, 6, 23-1, 23-2, 60-1, 61)
Medium:
paintings

8
Artist name:
Andy Denzler
Exhibition name:
Trance
Running Dates:
thru July 22
Location:
Michael Schultz Gallery (Cheongdam stn, ln 7 ex 9; walk towards Citibank, across the street from Gucci)

9
Artist name:
Henrijs Preiss, Michael Anderson, Mai Ottersen Redfield
Exhibition name:
Diverspective
Running Dates:
thru July 26
Location:
BJN Gallery (Gyeongbokgung stn, ln 3; bus 1020 or 1711 to Lotte Apartment)
Medium: installation

10
Artist name:
Michael A. Russ
Exhibition name:
TinTones – Rough Print
Running Dates:
thru July 31
Location:
Club MOW – Art Gallery (Hakdong stn, Ln 10; walk straight and take left at main intersection, first street before Jungang Heights Park Apt. towards Dosan Park)

11
Artist name:
Marc Riboud
Exhibition name:
Marc Riboud Photography Exhibition
Running Dates:
thru Aug. 5
Location:
Hangaram Design Museum, Seoul Arts Center (Nambu Terminal stn, Ln 3 ex 5)
Medium:
photography

12
Artist name:
Group exhibition
Exhibition name:
Move: Art and Dance since 1960s
Running Dates:
thru Aug. 12
Location:
National Museum of Contemporary Art, Korea, Gwacheon (Seoul Grand Park stn, ln 4; shuttle bus from ex 4, tram from ex 2 or 20 min walk from ex 2)

13
Artist name:
Alexander Calder
Exhibition name:
Noir
Running Dates:
thru Aug. 17
Location:
Kukje Gallery (Anguk stn, ln 3 ex 1; walk toward Gyeongbokgung and turn right before the palace, it's across the street)
Medium: sculpture

14
Artist name:
group exhibition
Exhibition name:
The Private Land
Running Dates:
July 20 – August 19
Location:
Gallery Skape (Hangangjin stn, ln 6; best reached by taxi, 32-23 Hannam-dong)
Medium:
varies by artist

15
Artist name:
Ranbir Kaleka
Exhibition name:
untitled
Running Dates:
July 3 – August 26
Location:
Arario Gallery, Cheonan-si (next to Shinsegae Department Store Chungcheong)
Medium: video art, mixed media

16
Artist name:
Pipilotti Rist
Exhibition name:
Spear to Heaven
Running Dates:
July 19 – September 16
Location:
Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art, Hanam-dong, Seoul (Hangangjin stn, ln 6 ex 1; follow signs)
Medium: visual art

17
Artist name:
Russian artists
Exhibition name:
Symphony of Light and Color
Running Dates:
thru September 16
Location:
Asia Museum, Daejeon
Medium:
paintings

18
Artist name:
Eric Carle
Exhibition name:
Eric Carle Drawings Exhibition
Running Dates:
thru September 9
Location:
Yoondang Art Hall (Apgujeong stn, Ln 3 ex 2; turn left and walk 5 min, turn right before main road, walk 3 min)
Medium: children's drawings, sketches

19
Artist name:
group exhibition
Exhibition name:
The Vertical Village
Running Dates:
thru October 7
Location:
Total Museum of Contemporary Art (Gyeongbokgung stn, ln 3; bus 1020 or 1711 to Lotte,Samsung Apartment)
Medium: installation, photography

20
Artist name:
Astrid Koeppe
Exhibition name:
untitled
Running Dates:
July 12 – 21
Location:
Gallery Dam (Anguk stn, ln 3 ex 1; turn right at Starbucks, walk straight, gallery is on the right)
Medium: drawings, sketches


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THE SMASHING PUMPKINS
SOULWAX
gymclassheroes.
장기하와 얼굴들
IDIOTAPE
GLENCHECK
8.15Wed
NewOrder
TEARS FOR FEARS
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FOSTERTHEPEOPLE
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DANCE, MINGLE, BE GAY

The Meet Market's monthly event aims to create a safe space for the queer community and its allies

Story by Jenny Na / **Photos by** James Little

> "Before, being gay was always a shameful, embarrassing thing and everyone would hide in the closet … But these days it's changing and some gay people are actually proud (of their identity)."
>
> **– Eunhee Kim**



Tall, tattooed, buff and bald, Madame Sarcasma stepped onto the stage at a small club in Seoul in a black leather rope headdress and short red tutu, a set of long, gauzy red sleeves billowing out behind her. As she sang "The Origin of Love," a riff on human sexuality from the gender-bending show "Hedwig and the Angry Inch," and took it to its gritty crescendo, cheers filled the smoky room. When she lip-synched to Pink's "U+Ur Hand," the crowd reached up to meet her, their arms high in the air as they sang and danced along. Her drag performance that night last fall – for a mixed crowd from the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, straight, expat and Korean communities – was a fitting opening act for the Meet Market, a mash-up of disco and drag with a sly nod to the old proverb of seek and you shall find.

The event is held every month or so at Myoung Wol Gwan, a venue that has long been a staple of underground culture in Hongdae. It features saucy drag and burlesque performances by a rotating list of divas and dapper dans, as well as kissing booths and raffles organized by various non-profit groups.

Past events have had decade-specific themes with music to match, and guests are encouraged (though not required) to dress accordingly. To reflect the theme, attendees have shown up as greasers, flappers and their favorite pop superstars. One very ambitious lady even appeared as Amelia Earhart for the Roaring '20s Meet Market last fall.

This month's event on July 21 is being promoted as the Meet Market Masquerade, a costume ball that will also feature performances by local belly dancers Eshe and Navah.

The clever name and costumed antics are all in good fun, but at its heart the Meet Market is about creating a safe space for the queer community and its allies, and filling a void that has long kept queer and straight, expat and Korean, in separate worlds on (and off) the dance floor.

SAFE TO DANCE

Last month, the Meet Market was the unofficial after-party for Seoul's Pride Parade, a small yet well-attended affair that was representative of the space that Korean society allots to its LGBTQ members. The parade route consisted of just one-and-a-half blocks along the Cheonggyechon stream. Though that's an improvement from previous years, when marchers had to walk alongside moving traffic, it's clear there's still room for growth.

The Meet Market's organizers hope that by creating an event for queer and straight, expat and Korean, the tiny space inhabited by the queer community will expand much as it has in the West: through personal connections between people of all races, genders and sexual orientations sharing a laugh, drink or dance.

Behind the scenes are the Butch-hers, a group of expat and Korean women whose visions for the event are colored by their own unique experiences of queer community, both here and abroad. Organizer Kim Thompson is a poet and performance artist from the United States who made the move to Seoul in October 2009.

A year ago, she and her friend Rachel Miller were in a bar with Myoung Wol Gwan owner Eunhee Kim when Kim started talking about hosting an LGBTQ party. The idea for the Meet Market was born, and together the three launched the event last fall.

"I was reminiscing over Minneapolis and the queer community that I missed, and of there being allies who were involved and feeling that was something that was really lacking here," she said. "(Back home), it's a total mixture of allies and queers and I've only ever seen that as a very positive thing, so I couldn't help but believe that it could be positive here."

The queer community in Korea has traditionally and with few exceptions been segregated into gay and lesbian — with the guys in Itaewon, the gals in Hongdae — and no space in between for the two to mingle, either with each other or with friends who are straight or otherwise queer.

The Meet Market was created to remedy that, if only for one night every 30 days.

> "It's important that spaces just for lesbians or just for gay boys exist, but I think there also needs to be a place where you can invite your friends regardless of their sexuality, as long as everyone is going to act respectfully towards one another, where you can meet in the middle and feel like you're in a comfortable place."
>
> **— Kim Thompson**

"It's important that spaces just for lesbians or just for gay boys exist, but I think there also needs to be a place where you can invite your friends regardless of their sexuality, as long as everyone is going to act respectfully towards one another, where you can meet in the middle and feel like you're in a comfortable place," Thompson said. "I also feel like that creates greater understanding and solidarity, because there might be someone who maybe has never been around a lot of queer people in their life, but it's great if they can go to a space and see that actually we are all the same."

Thompson said that Kim, the Myoung Wol Gwan owner, practices this philosophy of inclusion by employing staff from across the LGBTQ spectrum, which is one of the things that led them to hold the Meet Market there.

"We always knew that we wanted it at Myoung Wol Gwan because of how Eunhee runs the bar in terms of it being a place that I think is very unique for Seoul, for Korea," Thompson said. "I especially love the way (Kim) provides a space for the transgender community, I think that's very important, and I think that by doing things like that it brings attention to a community without putting a weird, uncomfortable spotlight on it."

Before taking over Myoung Wol Gwan, Kim owned the now-defunct Mongwon bar and club in Sinchon and has been part of Seoul's queer scene for more than a decade. In her view, the time is right for an event like this because of how recent representations of queer people in pop culture are changing in society, however slowly.

"Before, being gay was always a shameful, embarrassing thing and everyone would hide in the closet," Kim said. "But these days it's changing and some gay people are actually proud (of their identity). It's actually become a kind of trend to be gay. Korean dramas have had an influence because there are gay characters and they are represented as well dressed and fashionable, especially gay boys."

Thompson says that they are also hoping to facilitate connections between expats and Koreans, though getting the word out to both communities has been a somewhat humorous venture.

"In translation it has sometimes been called the 'Gogi Sijang' (the Meat Market), so we've had to provide an explanation," she said. "As someone who enjoys words, I just think it's funny to say, 'I'm going to meet some meat at the Meet Market.'"

The organizers' name — the Butch-hers — is another play on words that is difficult to convey in Korean.

"Although I don't particularly identify as being butch, by Korean standards I know I fall into that category," she said. "But that hyphen is really important."

At the event, the only people who are not welcome are those seeking to exploit the safe space the organizers are trying to create by acting as voyeurs. Anyone violating that rule can expect to be escorted out the door.

DRAG WORKS

Drag has been a staple of past Meet Markets. Up to now, a rotating group of performers has been culled from the expat community, but the organizers hope to feature Korean performers in the future.

Thompson believes that drag makes the event more accessible to a group of people who might not otherwise attend, perhaps because drag by its very nature is so over the top in how it plays with gender norms that it somehow engenders comfort.

"It's men or women playing with gender, but they're doing it to this extreme. No woman dresses the way a drag queen usually does, or no man usually dresses the way a drag king does, and no one acts that way. It's taking everything to this incredible extreme and I think because it does that, it actually makes everyone feel comfortable," she said. "That said, how can one not love seeing a tall drag queen?"

For Madame Sarcasma, who in addition to performing at the Meet Market creates performance opportunities of her own, most recently in the form of a solo performance piece that is also slated for this month, drag is not just for the queer community.

"To me, and many performers I admire and know, drag is not simply a 'gay thing.' Gender is malleable, and women and men have been gender-bending and blending for centuries," she said. "As well, I've seen and performed with drag queens, drag kings, faux queens and the gender ambiguous … It's a celebration, an exploration, and at times an investigation of gender."

> "You don't have to accept us or I don't have to accept the difference if I really don't get it, but you don't have to hate. So I'm really glad to talk about this because some people will get it, some people will not. It doesn't matter, but I'm happy that even though the Meet Market is a party, it still has a story to tell."
>
> — S.W.



FUTURE MEETS

The future of the Meet Market lies with its Korean organizing team.

"I don't think this (event) needs to become a foreigner-run space. I think there's enough places like that that also exist that are good for what they need to be, but we're not the permanent or dominant culture here and I don't think we should try to be that way," Thompson said. "I think that sometimes we think we're here to change things for them and I would argue that we're not. We might be here to model a certain sense of self acceptance that says it is important to be able to value yourself and feel okay with who you are, but I don't think we're here to change how Koreans deal with being queer."

The experience of one of the organizers with a street art painting illustrates the attitudes about the LGBTQ community predominant in Korean society that make the Meet Market necessary. A fashion designer who is only "out" in certain circles, S.W. asked that her full name not be used in order to protect her from the discrimination she said she'd face if she were open about her sexuality.

> "(In Minnesota), it's a total mixture of allies and queers and I've only ever seen that as a very positive thing, so I couldn't help but believe that it could be positive here as well."
>
> — **Kim Thompson**

Every day, she would walk by a picture as it was being created by expat artist H.P. Sauz.

The blue-and-white picture, painted onto a wall in Haebangchon, depicts five families: two single parent families, one with a single mom and the other with a single dad, and three families of three featuring one heterosexual couple, a lesbian couple and a gay male couple. The title "My Family" appears along the bottom in both English and Korean. "I loved the picture because it's kind of like our theme, too, like let's get together and be understanding and things like that," S.W. said. "A couple of months later I saw this red X marked on the gay families. The single mother, the single father were fine but they put this X on the gay parents and it really made me unhappy."

Later, somebody fixed it, but another X soon reappeared along with the Korean phrase "gajeunghan-il," a biblical term meaning abomination. (Images of another incident with the artwork can be seen online at Mattias Lehmann's blog mattlemonphotography.wordpress.com.) "I actually thought that I was kind of used to it, but it actually made me really angry, so I went out and I fixed it."

The next Monday, the red X was back.

For S.W., the vandalism is representative of the intolerance that the Meet Market is trying to overcome.

"You don't have to accept us or I don't have to accept the difference if I really don't get it, but you don't have to hate," she said. "So I'm really glad to talk about this because some people will get it, some people will not. It doesn't matter, but I'm happy that even though the Meet Market is a party, it still has a story to tell."

DETAILS:

The Meet Market Masquerade hits Myoung Wol Gwan on July 21. Doors open at 9 p.m. The cover is 10,000 won and includes one free drink. Find more on the Meet Market's Facebook page: www.facebook.com/meetmarketseoul.

DIRECTIONS:

Myoung Wol Gwan is located near the Hongdae playground, Hongik University Station Line 2, exit 9. For more detailed directions, see the Facebook page.





For more information:
thearrivalstore.com

EASY LANDING

The Arrival Store offers everything a newcomer might need and more

Story by Rob McGovern

Remember arriving in Korea? Landing at Incheon Airport to be met by a recruiter and then being taken to a seedy motel with a mirrored ceiling for the night before being put on a train the next morning, only to be shown to an empty apartment and told to be ready at 9 a.m. the next day for work? You have no phone or internet connection, the fridge is empty and the bed has no sheets, so you sleep with your coat over you wondering what the hell you have gotten yourself into. Okay, so this was my experience, but it can't be too dissimilar to hundreds, if not thousands, of other new arrivals to Korea.

In fact, something similar probably happened to Scot Sustad and Reuben Zuidhof, prompting them to start The Arrival Store, which has an office in Gyeonggi Province.

In a nutshell, The Arrival Store is a one-stop shop to help you set up a home in a new country, offering all the services you might need, and probably some you don't—but that's okay, as you can send back things you later decide you don't want. Their model is simple, according to the website: "Offer competitive prices, great products, personal service and deliver them in an innovative and fun way."

One unique feature of TAS is that it offers to prepare everything for you before you even leave your home country. You can literally have a box waiting for you at Incheon Airport with all the things you think you'll need to get started – including bed sheets and a working mobile phone.

One of the staffers who once lived in Korea will even give you a pre-departure call to help quell any fears you (or your parents) might have. Shipping is done overnight from a location in Korea and payment can be made via bank transfer, PayPal or the normal credit card routes. TAS also offers an "order now, pay later" option that gives you 60 days to pay from when the order ships.

That's convenient because unless you go with a chunk of cash, you might need to live somewhat frugally until receiving your flight reimbursement or first paycheck. As Sustad, who spent a few years teaching here and left in 2008, says, "(It) might be a month before you get a bank account set up, so how do you pay your first phone bill?" Well, they have that covered, too.

If your phone bill comes before you get your Korean bank account set up, they offer a grace period during which late fees accrue on your first bill.

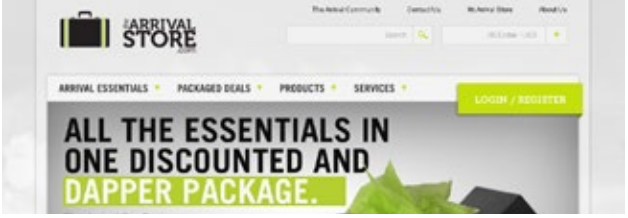
Sustad and Zuidhof started a recruiting firm after living and teaching abroad in Korea, among other places, and it was the repeated requests for products and services from people they had sent to Korea that led them to conclude that there was indeed a market for resettlement products and services in English. Without language, you can be the most resourceful person in the world but still get nowhere.

Launched formally in August 2010, TAS is now in full swing with customer service available in English and Korean from people who have either lived the life of a new arrival or have had experience dealing with them.

February and August are their biggest times of the year, with EPIK (English Program in Korea) and the Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education bringing in new teachers, but there is a steady flow of people arriving throughout the year.

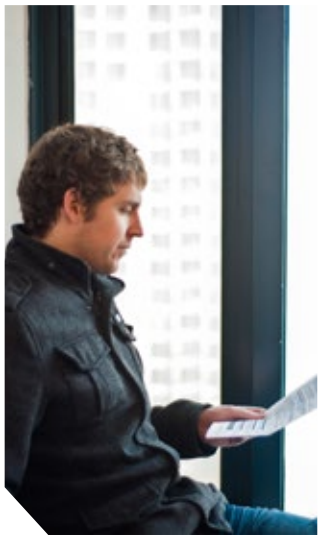
Anyone who has been in Korea a while and had to deal with Korean companies will be able to appreciate the efforts that Sustad and Zuidhof have made in getting the company set up.





Arrival Store kits include a cellphone, bed sheets and a copy of Groove Korea magazine.





The Arrival Store is based in Korea and has an office in Vancouver, BC.

It sounds easy on paper, and Sustad says that people have had the idea before, but that nothing like this has really existed until now is a testament to the fact that it isn't as easy as people think. The two say they have now "reached the hump" in terms of their business and, although they don't predict perfectly smooth sailing from here on, they expect it to be a bit easier.

Stage one in their grand plan was always to take care of arrival essentials: a phone, bedding, power adapters and things you need to function for the first week or two once you arrive. And so far Sustad and Zuidhof are pretty happy about how things have gone.

> You have no phone or internet connection, the fridge is empty and the bed has no sheets, so you sleep with your coat over you wondering what the hell you have gotten yourself into.

In stage two, they say they will expand their range of products and services to include rentals such as camping equipment or longboards – things that you wouldn't bring with you yet wouldn't necessarily want to buy.

This might be the hook they need to attract recurring customers. Initially, people only need one mobile phone and one set of bed sheets. Their plan is to offer products and services that people come back for again and again, including foreign food items, which have made an appearance recently on the site. The range of those items, they say, will continue to expand.

In the distant stage three, part of the plan is to offer additional services such as event planning.

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Despite the duo's efforts, plenty of people are out there ready and willing to criticize. Message boards attract all kinds of people and there have been times when trolls – people who just log on to criticize, to put it bluntly – have said things about the business either for no reason or without really knowing what they are talking about.

Despite the duo's efforts, plenty of people are out there ready and willing to criticize. Message boards attract all kinds of people and there have been times when trolls – people who just log on to criticize, to put it bluntly – have said things about the business either for no reason or without really knowing what they are talking about.

Sustad has spent time, too much time, defending TAS on popular forums like Dave's ESL Café. He says some customers will take a chance, but that others won't because they are frightened off by nay-sayers who can come across as a bit bitter. There have been a few times when the two lads thought about throwing in the towel, too, but then they were reminded that there is a need for their services. Since they started, they have seen a 10-fold increase in customers.

One of the criticisms they've received is that the store traps customers into buying things they don't need. Sustad says that was never the intention. "The last thing we want to do is sell a bunch of bells and whistles and stuff like that that people don't need," he said. And why would they? They have been there themselves and know they would get found out pretty quickly, as word spreads like wildfire among the expat community. In some ways, TAS proves its worth especially outside of Seoul. "A lot of people living in Seoul will look at us and say, 'I can get all of this stuff in Itaewon,'" said Zuidhof, who arrived in Korea in 2004. But that simply isn't the case in far-off provinces.

And for every troll, there is a slew of satisfied customers, as is indicated by the testimonials the company has received.

One customer named Ashley wrote: "If you are coming to Korea for the first time, or even if you've been here for a while and want to have a company you can count on in a time of need, then TheArrivalStore.com is the company for you! They will take care of you as if you are their closest friend or family. They are patient, understanding and genuinely concerned about their customers having the best experience possible while they are here in Korea."

More to-the-point testimonials followed. "Everything was great, I got everything I needed on time and everything worked perfectly. Thanks so much," wrote another customer, Nathan, from the United States.

Yet another customer named Rebekah wrote, "I have greatly appreciated your services these past 12 months and I will continue to recommend your service to friends in the future."

Dozens of similar comments follow. And while this is starting to sound like an ad for The Arrival Store, it isn't. TAS is a great concept that offers a service where one is lacking.

Yes, it's a business, and yes, they make money, but there is something noble about providing a service that is needed, and often necessary, while making a living at the same time. Ultimately Sustad and Zuidhof want a TAS for every country, but for now they will settle for a goal of 20 in the next five years.

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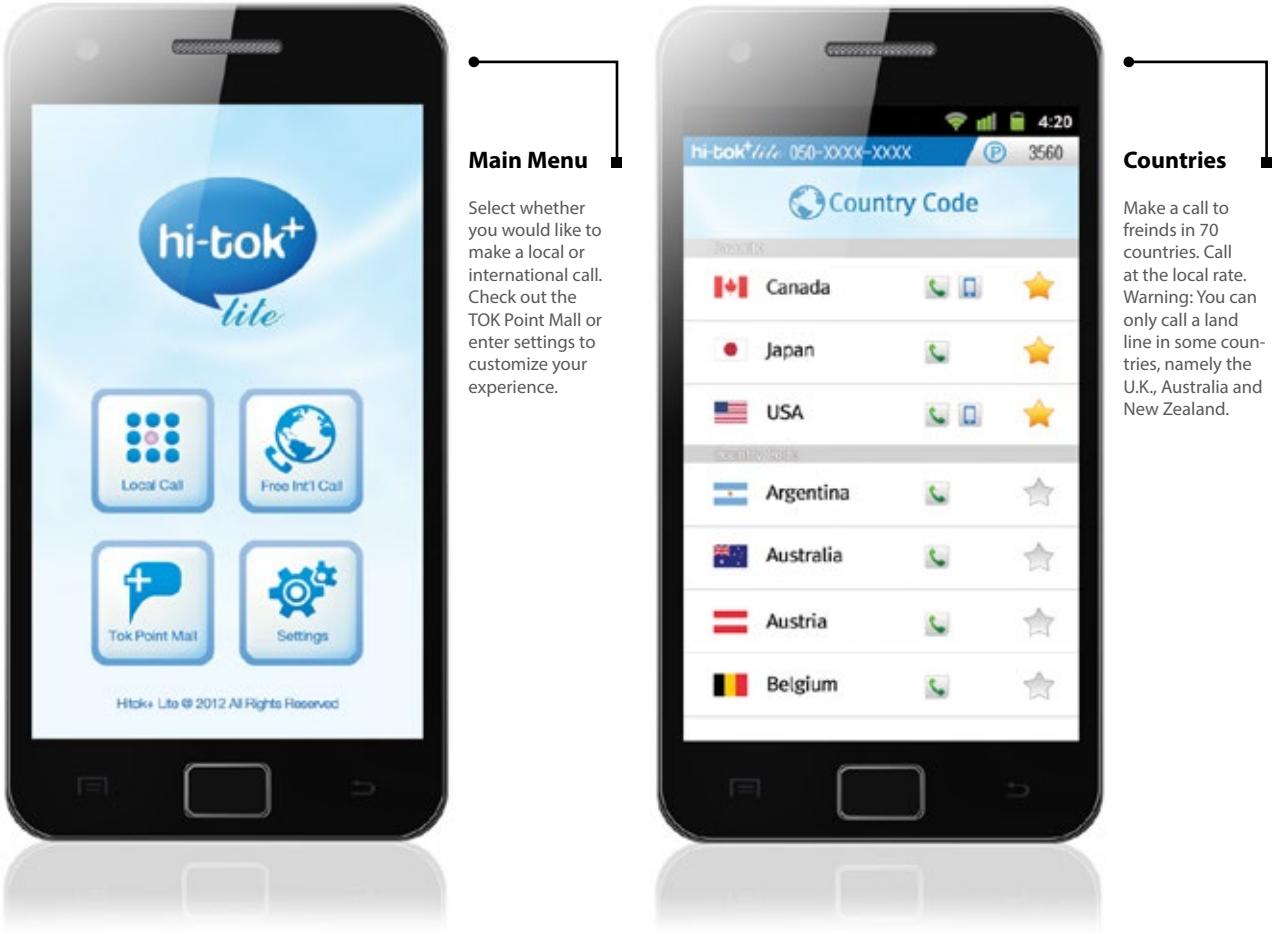
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HiTok your way to free stuff

App review: Earn points, save money on long distance

By Groove Korea staff

Faced with mounting international phone bills, Erin Adams had to look for ways to trim costs. In her hunt she came across a popular new app called HiTok Plus Lite.

Made by Seoul-based SS Trade, the app is catching on for two main reasons: You can make international calls at local rates, and you get points for talking, which you can use to get free stuff. And the new app has one major hand over rivals like Skype: You accumulate "TOK" points as you talk. The more you talk, the more points you get.

The app is currently available for Android users, but the iPhone version will launch in the second week of July. Spend your points at the TOK Point Mall within the app and get mobile coupons for places such as Family Mart, Dunkin' Donuts, Burger King, Smoothie King, Paris Baguette and more.

"Besides saving money, the best thing about this app is that it's convenient," said Adams, a 28-year-old American. "I can make international calls wherever and whenever I want with my cell phone at local rates.

I don't have to be always in front of my computer to talk to my family and friends anymore."

Making calls is simple: You can make calls in one of two ways — through the app itself, or just through your phone's normal dialer. After downloading the app and registering your phone number, you are assigned a special number starting with 050. From there, you can just use your phone as you usually would.

Making a call from the app doesn't take any more time than using your normal dialer — though it's not totally necessary. Just open the HiTok app and choose from one of four ways to make a call — dial with the keypad, choose a recent call, select a pre-set favorite or choose from your contact list, which loads into the app automatically.

It's all very simple. The only difference is that customers can select either a 050 or 010 number to appear on the screen of the receiver's phone.

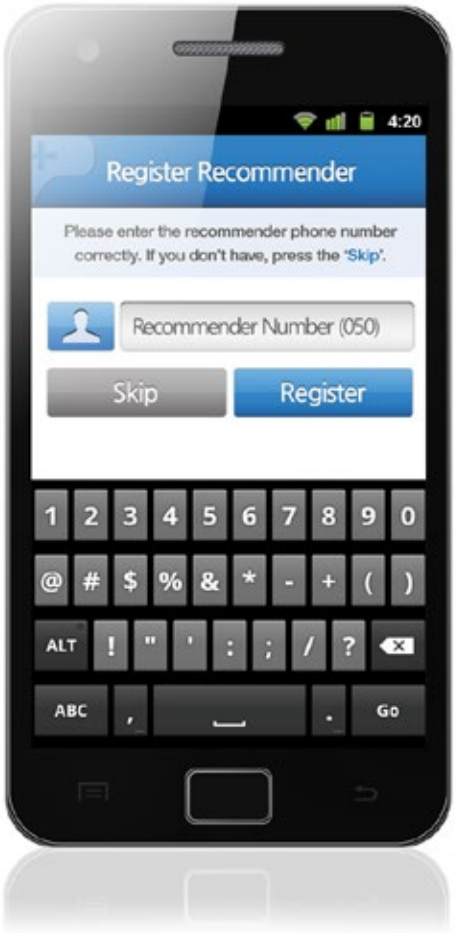
Using HiTok Plus Lite has another unique advantage: when selecting the country of the person you are calling, the local time is displayed. No more accidental 3 a.m. phone calls! On top of that, the quality is noticeably clearer than most other apps. "I have to make international calls very often because all my family and friends live in Texas," said Adams.

App of the month
Name: Hi-Tok Plus Lite

Platform: Android (now), iPhone (2nd week of July)
Cost: Free
Type: Phone service
Rating: 4 stars out of 5

"You earn points with every minute you spend talking on the phone through the app"

— Erin Adams



Recommend

Take advantage of their "perpetual referral reward system": refer someone and you get points as they use the app — forever.



Tok Point Mall

Earn "Tok Points" as you make calls and use them to purchase products from third-party companies.

The good thing about this app is that I can make international calls at local rates and I save money. I've used other apps to make international calls but the call quality is terrible."

However, where the app falls short is that it is only available for Android users until the middle of July. Another problem some users won't like is that you can only call a land line in some countries, namely the U.K., Australia and New Zealand. Lastly, one user we talked to complained that the coupons offered in the TOK Point Mall are too "women-centric." "I wish other coupons geared more specifically for men were offered, such as sports-related items," said one U.K. resident in Seoul.

For the vast majority of Android users, however, the TOK point system is a key benefit. Koreans have long had access to these kinds of money-saving features; point cards such as Happy Point have been popular among young Koreans for years. This is the first time such a service has been made available to expats.

Generally, you get five points per minute you talk, but there are a lot of ways to quickly accumulate more. Take advantage of their perpetual referral reward system: refer someone and you get points as they use the app — forever. The more people you refer, the more points you get — and you don't have to make a single call. One point is worth 1 won.

"It's like making money while you're talking on the phone," said Adams. "You earn points with every minute you spend talking on the phone through the app, and if you have enough points you can exchange them for coupons in TokPoint mall to buy food, coffee, cosmetics, and other things."

Alyssa Henning, a 25-year-old Canadian living in Korea, agrees: "I earn points by using this service and used them to buy drinks, food, and cosmetics." Henning uses a Galaxy S2.

> "I can make international calls wherever and whenever I want with my cell phone at local rates. I don't have to be always in front of my computer to talk to my family and friends anymore."
>
> **— Erin Adams**

Wireless and Beyond

We can't leave out a mention of Wireless and Beyond, a subsidiary of SS Trade. They are a one-stop shop for expats in need of a phone. They sell both prepaid and contract phones to all expats regardless of visa type. New and used phones are available. Their staff speak English and Chinese.

Other services that might come in handy one day: sign up for roaming reservation and activate the phone you brought with you to Korea from your home country. You can choose from any Korean carrier.

Check out the online mall at www.wnbmall.com.

Wireless and Beyond info

Phone: (02) 1877-9912

Directions: Yongsan Station I'PARK mall; go to section G on the 8th floor; it's located near elevators 10 and 11.

Web: www.wnbmall.com

Healthy hair, Healthy mind





Abe Masahiro spent most of last year traveling back and forth between Korea and Japan for business. He suffered from alopecia areata — a condition that causes round patches of hair loss — for 10 years before it worsened into folliculitis, which is the inflammation of hair follicles. After going a decade with little to no progress, Masahiro had had enough. Desperate, he walked through the doors of Lee Moon Won Clinic. And in only a matter of months he was cured. He was so satisfied with the results that he retuned with his wife to treat her scalp disease.

The clinic offers professional examinations, treatment, prevention of hair loss, hair implants, customized toupees and medical cosmetics. In addition, the clinic provides hair salon services such as perms, dyeing and hair treatment. These services start at 30,000 won.

> "Oriental medical treatment enhances one's overall conditions and results in higher satisfaction for patients."
>
> — Dr. Lee Moon-won

Lee Moon Won Clinic is a one-stop service for examination, treatment and prevention of hair loss and scalp maintenance. As the first medical institute in Korea to offer treatment, it has helped more than 40,000 people since Dr. Lee Moon-won started the practice in 2002. Of that total, 10 percent of the clinic's patients have been foreigners from more than 13 different countries.

Most of these foreign patients visit Korea specifically for the clinic's treatment. "As we have accumulated numerous cases with foreigners in unique conditions, we are now extending our services to expats in Korea and we are confident that we can cater to expats' expectations," he said.

Besides English, "we have Chinese and Japanese speaking staff as well." In the case of scalp diseases, Western medicine tends to focus on the treatment of symptoms by applying anti-inflammatory, antibiotic, sebum restrainer and antihistaminic (medicines), according to Dr. Lee.

As the methods are highly dependent on chemical medicines, the symptoms are likely to reoccur as soon as a patient stops the medication. However, Lee said that Oriental medicine is more focused on strengthening the immune system and ultimately curing the cause, although he admitted treatment can take longer.

"In the end," Lee said, "Oriental medical treatment enhances one's overall conditions and results in higher satisfaction for patients."

On average, Lee Moon Won Clinic combines three to four different treatment methods or medicines to treat scalp diseases or hair loss. The most popular and common combination is Yakchim (scalp injection), external application (application or spraying of medicine to scalp), and scalp massage





(cleanse and strengthen scalp conditions). Chronic scalp diseases (seborrheic dermatitis or follicultis) normally show improvements after three to four months of treatment and are completely cured within six months. However, alopecia can take nine months to a year for full recovery. These treatments entail a visit every week and cost between 3 million won to 8 million won in total.

"Our services and treatment are not limited to aesthetic purposes. Rather, we focus on helping one regain confidence and self-esteem," Lee said. He told the story of a female college student in her early 20s who had come to the clinic with her mother three years ago. "She was afraid of meeting people and was self-conscious of her hair loss, and eventually lacked any confidence at all and cut herself off from social activities. After we were done with her, she became active and confident."

Dr. Lee studied at Woosuk University, where he earned his Ph. D. in human anatomy in 2008. "It's unusual for an oriental medical doctor to study human anatomy, however I majored in human anatomy because I believe that Oriental medicine should be pursued in parallel with Western medicine," he said.

Although Dr. Lee devotes himself to treating and researching better treatments during the day, in the evenings he indulges in a little ice hockey. He said hockey is the best sport to maintain a physical and mental balance. "Ice hockey is an intense sport that requires both physical power and delicate control of the hockey stick, not to mention teamwork," he said.

Dr. Lee was born and raised in Jeonju, which he calls "the capital of Korean food and arts, as well as the origin of Oriental medicine." Korean authority regulates just one Oriental medical school per province. However, North Jeolla Province has two Oriental medical schools, demonstrating the region's contribution to the study and abundance of high-quality medicines in the region.

The clinic provides a hair loss prevention shampoo and hair care products co-developed by Lee Moon Won Clinic and a famous hairdresser. The products are approved by KFDA.

Its scientific and natural treatments have recorded no side effects so far. The clinic's recent research has been focused on examination methods to evaluate the "health" of one's hair. The examination methods have started to be applied to patent treatment.

The clinic has two doctors and 14 staff, who see 30-50 patients per day and operates on a reservation-only system to allow them to focus more on each patient. The clinic covers a round-trip taxi fare from anywhere within Seoul for a patient's first visit.

Contact Info:

The clinic covers a round-trip taxi fare from anywhere within Seoul for a patient's first visit.
(02) 511-1079
www.monegi.co.kr

Open hours:

Mon, Wed, Fri 10am-9pm
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CAPTURING KOREA:
The streets of Seoul

Everyone loves beautiful pictures. Groove Korea is teaming up with the Seoul Photo Club to give readers tips on where to get the best snaps on the peninsula. Our photographers will share tips on how and where they shoot. To compete in the Photo Challenge and win great prizes from Groove Korea, head on over to the Seoul Photo Club on Flickr:
— flickr.com/groups/seoulphotoclub

Interview by Dylan Goldby / **Photos by** Zack Cluley



City Hall

Nikon D7000,
50mm f/1.8 D, ISO
100 1/640 at f/1.8





Junggye-dong

Nikon D7000,
50mm f/1.8 D, ISO
100 1/640 at f/1.8





Myeong-dong

Nikon D7000,
50mm f/1.8 D, ISO
100 1/640 at f/1.8



Dongdaemun

Nikon D7000,
50mm f/1.8 D, ISO
100 1/640 at f/1.8

CAPTURING KOREA:

SEOUL STREETS

A new perspective on a familiar place

> For me it's not just snapping photos. Street photography is one of the last styles that remains highly artistic -- technical creativity, you might say. It's 100 percent about composition, making the ordinary extraordinary.

Groove Korea: Give us a little background on yourself — the human and the photographer.

Zach Cluley: Coming from a big small town from Texas, I'm a far way from home to say the least. In short, Seoul captivated me from the get go. From the towering skyscrapers to the narrow alleyways, I've always wanted to live in a real big city and I find this environment widely photogenic on so many different levels.

Oddly enough, I've always considered myself a writer first, photographer second. But who's to say that will always be true? Recently I've spent more time behind the lens. But they've both been creative outlets for me, what keeps me going 24/7. And that's no exaggeration, I literally spend almost every second outside of work pursuing my passions; caffeine has become a close friend. Although, it doesn't feel like work when it's something you love.

Your repertoire has a lot of variety in it, especially at the beginning, but more recently you have been documenting the city of Seoul at a street level. Tell us a little bit about that.

Well, I will say I try not to confine myself to one style, especially since I haven't been doing this too long. I continue experimenting with everything, which happens to appeal to my wide-ranging interests, and doing so has exponentially contributed to the rapid development of my work.

Yet buried deep within it all lies this burning desire to document the world around me. Looking ahead, I hope to discover and shed light on the various stories less known on this intricate planet we inhabit. But life as a documentary photographer is not easy, and it's a long journey down that road. So for now, the streets of this complex city have been my training grounds.

Your street images generally have a fairly gritty, high-contrast black-and-white feel to them. How does this reflect your feelings about the city?

Seoul, like so many other enormous cities, is built atop infinite layers of personality and interaction, giving it a unique character only found here. But for the average person, it's difficult to notice the subtle differences in the everyday. Images in high-contrast black and white tend to highlight these understated characteristics, opening up the viewer to what it is I see.

But my street work isn't as much an expression of how I feel towards this city as it is how I see it. Life is gritty on the streets of Seoul: the by-product of cramming 24 million people into one area.

On the other hand, the millions of interactions that take place everyday, whether people are aware or not, is what makes it so intriguing. There's an inexplicable beauty to it, especially those moments of pure alignment between people and their environment. Although, now more than ever there's plenty of shit out there. For me it's not just snapping photos. Street photography is one of the last styles that remains highly artistic — technical creativity, you might say. It's 100 percent about composition, making the ordinary extraordinary.

Any tips for budding street documenters?

First, and most importantly, people don't just want to see what the same things they find on the streets.

Introduce new perspectives, get used to crouching; oftentimes things can appear drastically different once you get away from eye level. Second, create clear objectives, goals, for what you want to find that day. It can be simple things such as people with hats.

You might find it a little more interesting focusing on various emotions, people laughing or caught in a daze. These little themes will help narrow down all the clutter.

Last, always be ready for the unexpected. These will probably be your favorite photos as well. There's no predicting what we will find each day, so the main goal is training your eye to find these moments when they happen.

That's assuming you know your camera, which should never leave your side. Seriously, never.

To wrap up, what would you say is your favorite place in Korea to photograph and why?

That's a tough decision. It really depends on what you're looking to shoot that day.

As I mentioned before, Seoul is so photogenic that there are great places for all kinds of images. For my street work, though, I tend to find myself between Jongno, Chungmuro and Dongdaemun most often. I like the mornings there, too — you don't get all the mindless consumers crowding the areas, but the work force prepping for a long day.

Myeong-dong is a perfect example — a place I don't really enjoy visiting at night, but in the mornings it's magical. Scattered with workers and the small crowd of early shoppers, it's an ideal location before the lunch crowd floods in.

> I literally spend almost every second outside of work pursuing my passions . . . Although, it doesn't feel like work when it's something you love.

Zack Cluley

Zack Cluley is an American teacher, writer and photographer based in Seoul. Hailing from a small town in Texas, he finds his subjects on the streets of the bustling city he currently calls home, and focuses on finding fresh perspectives from various points of view, revealing beyond what meets the eye. This month, Cluley tells Groove Korea about his passion for street photography, interest in shooting in black-and-white, and his favorite places to discover peculiar subjects. To see his collection of observations, stories and adventures, take a look at his "perZpective" at perzpective.com.



PHOTO CHALLENGE

This month's winner:

Chris Backe
Shutter: 5″
Aperture: f/13
ISO: 100
Location:
Gyeongbokgung entrance, central Seoul
Sponsor: Kasan Camera
www.kasancamera.co.kr
(02) 771-5711



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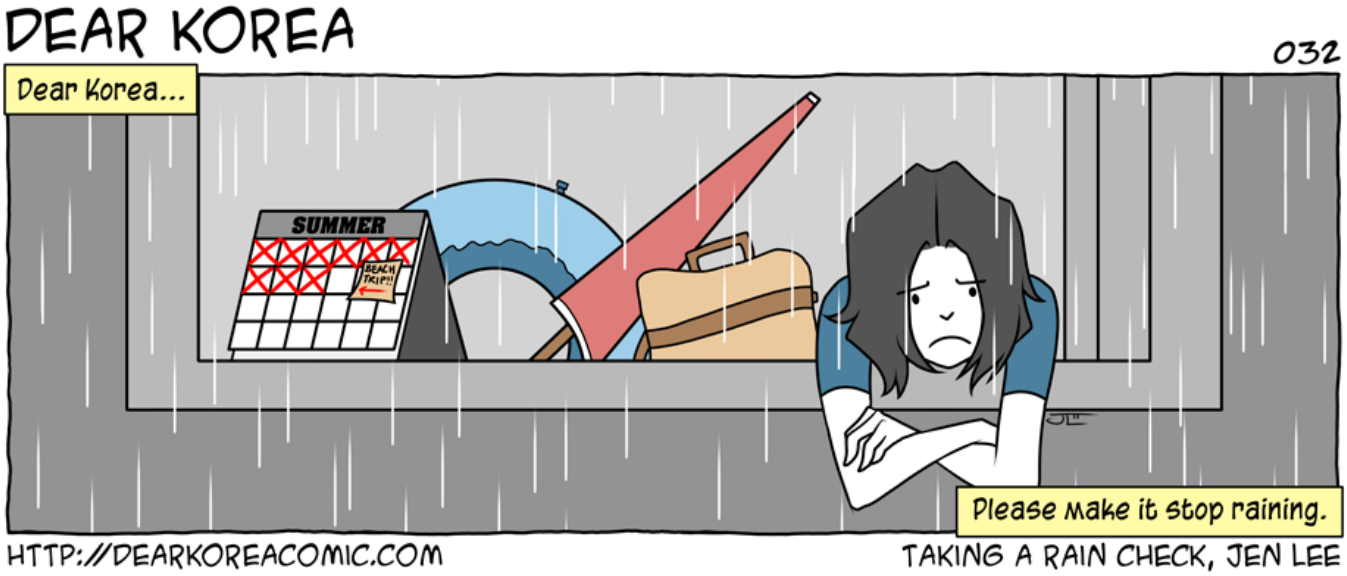
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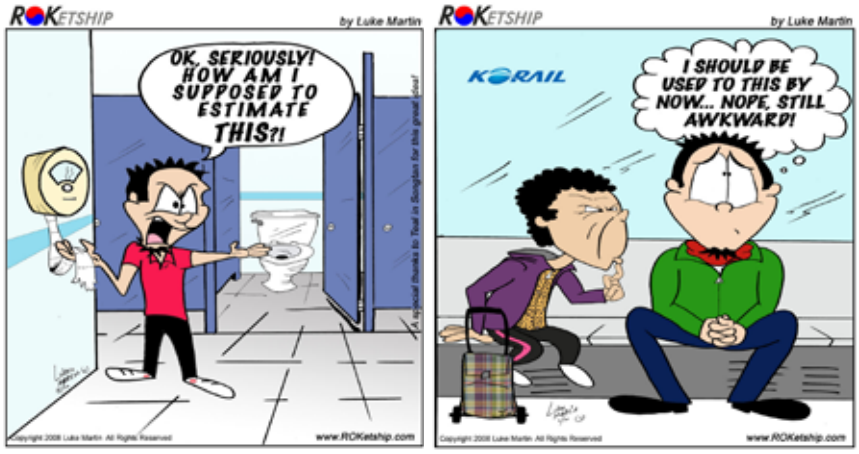
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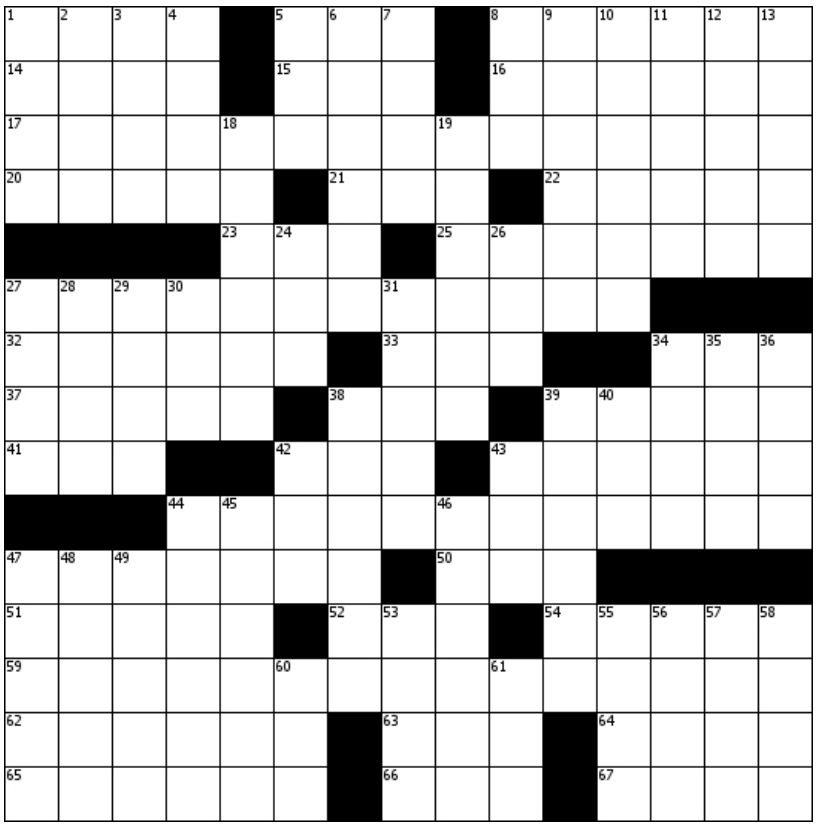


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Crossword



Across

1. About
5. Beanie Babies, e.g.
8. Collision
14. Place for shingles
15. SO2 monitoring org.
16. Christie detective
17. Bayer product
20. __ good example
21. Young Reagan
22. Burns creations
23. Quotation insertion
25. Manage
27. Role for Sarah Michelle Gellar
32. Hebrew prophet
33. __-en-Provence, France
34. Half a bray
37. North Atlantic threats
38. Fab start?
39. Desert building material
41. Cold reaction
42. "Mangia!"
43. Matured
44. "Margaritaville" singer
47. Just firm enough
50. Genetic material
51. Wounds
52. Floral loop
54. Indian prince
59. Bison
62. Ancient Dead Sea fortress
63. Buddhist sect
64. Some TVs
65. Arch site
66. Useful mineral
67. Tom Joad, for one

Down

1. Planets
2. Cad
3. Flabby
4. Does away with
5. Not again
6. Synopsis
7. Carpentry groove
8. Chats online with, briefly
9. Cartographer
10. Rap sheet listing
11. After, in Arles
12. Byronic weather
13. Nervous
18. Mickey Mouse courses
19. Breakdown of social norms
24. Alternative to -esque
26. Bug
27. Lettuce type
28. Manipulative one
29. "M*A*S*H" actor
30. Insignificant bit
31. Borgnine Oscar-winning role
34. Sewing machine inventor
35. Lie next to
36. Sobbed
38. Bobby's "Dallas" wife
39. Kennel protest
40. OED listing
42. First to respond, often: Abbr.
43. Hired hood
44. Show contempt for
45. Like some information
46. Certain corrupter
47. "Me too"
48. "Death of a Salesman" name
49. Mini or midi
53. Automaker Ferrari
55. Bushy do
56. Common nursery rhyme name
57. Jai __
58. Put one over on
60. Uniform accessory
61. Le Monde article

Sudoku

1		5						6
2	4							1
6	8		7				4	
5		8	9	1	7			
		3	5					
			6				9	2
3					6	1	7	9
	9					6	3	
	7							

2				4	1			
5			6			8		
		3		7		9		4
7			1		4			5
				6			7	
		1		5				3
	6			9	7	1	3	8
					6	5		2
	2			1				

HOW TO PLAY

Sudoku requires no calculation or arithmetic skills. It is essentially a game of placing numbers in squares, using very simple rules of logic and deduction.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of the game is to fill all the blank squares in a game with the correct numbers. There are three very simple constraints to follow. In a 9 by 9 square Sudoku game:

- Every row of 9 numbers must include all digits 1 through 9 in any order.
- Every column of 9 numbers must include all digits 1 through 9 in any order.
- Every 3 by 3 subsection of the 9 by 9 square must include all digits 1 through 9.

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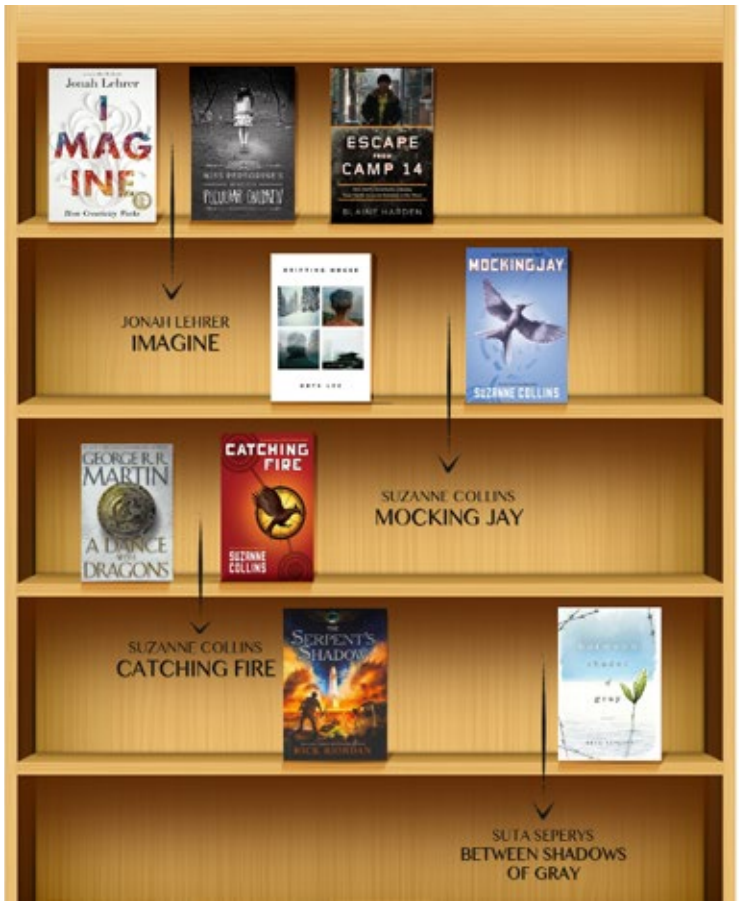
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Aries

You will have vibrant health this month. You could gain huge personal satisfaction for your job as well. You will also be supported by the committed other in your life in these endeavors. You will however, have to mind closely what you say this month, especially around the 22nd, when you could step in it up to your knee.

Taurus

Romance is all over you this month. Just be careful it doesn't get out of control around the 22nd. An interest on the job could sweep you off your feet on the 4th, but it can fall apart just as quickly. Be careful about over spending with regards to these romantic inclinations. On the 21st you will pull to improve your health.

Gemini

You may feel the need for redecorating. This could be a sword that cuts both ways this month. Your plans could work against you on the 7th and the 22nd, when you may feel completely frustrated with yourself. Think things through carefully before beginning. You may be provided with new romantic opportunities during the last week of the month.

Cancer

You'll be the busy little beaver this month running here and there and talking all the time. Endless chatter. Be careful around the 7th as something you say on the job could get you into hot water. Be especially careful on the 22nd, as taking your eyes from the road for just a moment could result in an accident.

Leo

You're a busy person this month and you could find yourself in a bit of a revamping mood. This could cause problems on the 7th and 22nd as people around you may react with resistance to those changes. Just keep your cool and express your aims and reasons effectively. Be cautious about overeating and over-indulging.

Virgo

This month you will be filled with energy. Your mind will probably be on money matters and how to accumulate more through your employment. There could be some surprises in that category as well. The caution is not to overextend yourself and cause health problems. With your money focus redoubled, you may find you have more in resources than you had counted on.

Libra

Sit back and relax. Your energy level is truly at low tide. There's a great chance that romance will be drawn to you. Your energy starts to return around the 21st. There is something of a warning here, as you many lose sight of your identity on the 28th.

Scorpio

July should be a very happy time for you. Your imagination will be sparked with thoughts of the future and the possibilities it could bring. Look for surprises around the home front this month. They could really be great. Your career also will be getting a major boost. By the last week of July, you may feel your energy level slipping.

Sagittarius

The possibilities in your career are ablaze this month. It's a time for real advancement. Your mind is running with the possibilities for the future. Relationship issues will probably be a major motivating force. Get focused on what you want in life. Lay down some constructive planning and make a road map to achieve these goals.

Capricorn

If you are looking for that vacation, now is the time. Pack those bags and don't look back. Plan well, so that after the 14th you make it home without incident. More than likely, the call to return will come for obligations in the employment/career area. This will be a time for you to shine especially after the 21st.

Aquarius

Have you been watching the family budget? If you haven't, you will. It will be your key focus this month, but not in a burdensome way. You may surprise yourself at your own creativity when it comes to juggling the checkbook and financial responsibilities this month. Don't be afraid to ask your partner to assist in these matters.

Pisces

You will have ample energy for committed relationships this month. Problems or old grievances could surface and you will have to deal with them. You'll do just fine if you keep your head. Shared finances bode well for the month, but just don't go on a spending spree around the 23rd. You may feel you have enough to spend without regard.



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